

NEW!

CRASH BANDICOOT & WIPEOUT 2097 REVIEWED & TIPPED!

PLAYSTATION PRO

ISSUE 1 December 1996 £2.95

FREE INSIDE:

Central Station

16 pages of Technophanzine for
PlayStation junkies

IDG
MEDIA



Mightier than Micro Machines -
dirtier than Destruction Derby

MONSTER TRUCKS

Victory Boxing 97

Tougher than Tyson

Star Gladiator

Taking on Tekken 2?

FINAL DOOM BREAK POINT PITBALL RAGING SKIES STRIKE POINT TOMB RAIDER CASPER

Some soccer games just look beautiful...



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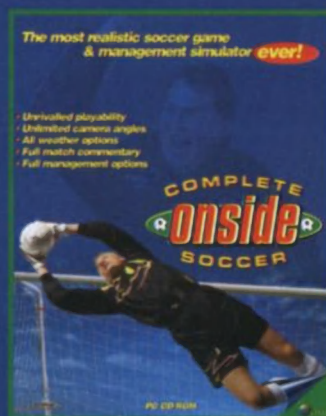
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**...only one
really lets you
play!**

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p70 It's A Megablast!

We take a early look at Activision's chaotic cuboid corker, **Blast Chamber**, as it prepares itself for a full review next issue

p72 Guns 'N' Robots

Interplay ventures into the world of 3D Doom clones with the mission-led romp, **Disruptor**. Loads of beefy guns and pure trigger-pumping mayhem

p74 The Eidos Five

Swagman, The Incredible Hulk, Deathtrap Dungeon, Ninja and Tomb Raider are all coming soon. Get to know them better via these top previews

p78 Wrestling On Mechanical Vines

Ancient arcade adventures, 3D robotic death-bringers and polygon punches all feature here as we take a look at Activision's new releases for '96

p80 Take It EA-sy

EA has three major titles due for release later this year. **Soviet Strike, The Darkening** and a musical adventure featuring rock dinosaurs, **Queen!**!

p84 Trash & Burn!

Destroy houses with a hammer or alternatively razz about on a off-road motorbike. Warner has both options available. Find out more inside

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p86 10 Ways To Win...

We show you how to become the true master of NFL Gameday with this wad of top technical tips from the folks who know

p88 Actua Golf Masterclass

Hip and happening golfing pro, Troy Weissmuller takes you on a guided tour around each and every hole of the entire Actua Golf experience

News p6

Fact, fiction and fun

Everything you need to know about the crazy world of the Sony PlayStation is right here, right now. Exclusive news from around the globe lies in wait as we provide you with thrilling stories on FIFA 97, the long-awaited Syndicate Wars, Capcom's first 3D beat'em-up, the runaway success of F1 and more. We've even secured a massive - I said massive - X2 competition, giving you the chance to win some state-of-the-art Sharp entertainment systems! Simply turn the page and experience the future. You know you want to...

Subscriptions p92

Get PSPro for mere buttons

This is your chance to get the mag for miles cheaper than you would get it in the shops, plus you'll get a free Gremlin PlayStation game for your trouble! Choose between Loaded, Actua Golf or alternatively, Actua Soccer as your cost free gift! It's all just one big crazy bargain!

Work in progress p62

p62 Keep On Trucking

The first ever PlayStation Pro cover star features in our first ever behind-the-scenes report, as we lift the lid on Psygnosis' forthcoming Monster Truck bonanza

p66 The Return Of The Sprocket Jockeys

Psygnosis is in the driving seat once more as we get the lowdown on Destruction Derby 2 from chief developer Martin Edmundson

Starwinder

Just like wipEout, ooh it is!
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Star Gladiators

We reveal Capcom's new beat 'em up beauty!
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Monster Trucks

Gasps at our full length feature inside!
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Victory Boxing

Sweaty blokes in tight fitting shorts. Phew!
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Black Down

Check out Agile Warrior 2
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Crash Bandicoot

Sony's new hero is here!
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Capcom mix Hollywood B-Movie madness with their tried-and-tested 2D beat-'em-up magic, ensuring that projectile special moves aren't dead just yet

p16 Break Point

Erase all memory of that Hyper Tennis fiasco and good old 'Pistol' Pete Sampras, as Ocean serves up a tennis game tastier than a plump punnet of strawberries

p20 wipEout2097 PRO TIPS

The futuristic g-force extravaganza is back! Psygnosis hits you hard with the adrenaline rush sequel to one of the biggest selling titles on earth

p24 StrikePoint

Hot super-powered chopper action ahoy as Brummie-based developer Elite takes you on a search and destroy mission around the globe

p28 Victory Boxing '97

It was a smash hit on the Saturn, and now JVC gives you a 'Producer's Cut' PlayStation version to knock about on. Bigger than Bruno? Find out inside

p32 Crash Bandicoot

Sony's very own console mascot makes his debut this month, providing you with 3D platform pleasure like you've never seen. A massive review awaits

p38 Black Dawn PRO TIPS

Virgin hits back at the plethora of helicopter titles currently swamping the market with its own sequel to the fabulous Agile Warrior. Which is nice...

p42 Raging Skies

More Tom Cruise wannabe fighter pilot action as the top blokes at Sony HQ roll out their air combat wagon for the masses once more

p46 Casper

He's a friendly ghost, a box office-bursting movie star and now Interplay has given him his very own game. Prepare to be scared, if you're about nine years old that is

p50 Final Doom

The first-person perspective gorefest is back in its - thankfully - final incarnation. More blood, more guns, more of the same and more money for GTI

p54 Pitball

Warner's space age hyper-violent basketball without the basket and the ball, slam dunks its way on to your console with a whole host of NBAliens

p56 Starwinder: The Race To Epsilon Indi

Imagine a poor man's wipEout on a rollercoaster with full World Of Sport coverage and numerous maniac racers and you're there. Well, nearly...

wipEout2097

Sequelastic! Adrenaline rush your way to victory!
p20



Final Doom

The splatterfest returns with bigger levels and loads more blood!
p50

central station

Expect the unexpected. The number one technophanzine exclusively for readers of PlayStation Pro makes its debut in this issue. Anything you like, we'll give you more of. Anything you don't, we'll sack it. Here's what's in this month's issue...

p2 You don't Want One Of Those...

We put the two hottest consoles back to back to find out which is the better option for your cash, the Saturn or the PlayStation. No prizes for guessing the outcome

p6 Marvellous, Magnificent Mangal

Our monthly roundup of all things Japanese goes into overload as we review the latest and the greatest anime objects on offer

p8 Live Delonators

Fancy contact lenses and plenty of hardcore techno anthems - yes, that's right, the PSPros descend on Manchester's Labatt's Apollo for a mad night of Prodigy-related mayhem

p10 Alternative Entertainment

Every month, we blag loads of books and videos, and every now and again we actually get around to reviewing them. Here are the best of the bunch

p12 Eastern Bloc-Buster

EA has an awesome search and destroy game waiting in the wings for you this Christmas. We take time out to chat with the developers

p14 Wouldn't Be Seen Dead In One

T-shirts promoting software come thick and fast into the PSP HQ. Some are wearable in public, but others simply end up being used to wash the car

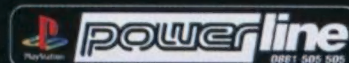


The Number 1 Technophanzine

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Guns and Pads for Lads

Logic 3 has been manufacturing quality peripherals for computers and consoles for years now and its expertise is showing itself in the PlayStation peripheral marketplace. Its current range of add-ons is as follows:

The **Station Master** pad features an LED function control panel, eight individual auto-fire modes, eight semi or hands-free auto-fires, individual slow motion with speed control, eight fire buttons and an eight-way thumb controller.

The basic shape is similar to that of its official Sony counterpart, with certain modifications such as the shoulder pads set at an angle instead of being flat and the d-pad and fire buttons being placed in slight craters.

Retailing at £16.99, it's a sturdy enough unit to consider buying.

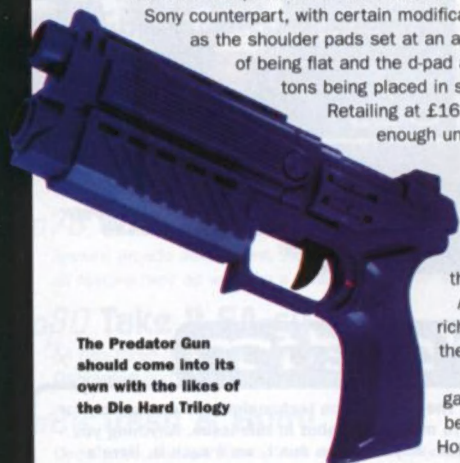
Even cheaper is the **Control Station** – this one's basically the same as the Station Master without the eight individual auto-fire modes, eight semi or hands-free auto-fires and individual slow motion with speed control. In other words pretty basic, although at £12.99 it's considerably cheaper than the standard Sony equivalent.

A more esoteric peripheral is the Predator Gun, which for the rich/foolhardy is a bargain at £29.99 as it's compatible with the Saturn as well.

Maybe not an essential purchase at the time of writing as games which require the use of the gun are few and far between. Having said that, the likes of Die Hard Trilogy and Horned Owl are far more exciting to play using it.



The Station Master features eight auto-fire modes with slow motion and speed control



The Predator Gun should come into its own with the likes of the Die Hard Trilogy



Excalibur features a third-person perspective engine that allows you to interact with people

Sword in the stone

Telstar are lining up a promising looking game for release this year, and if **Excalibur** fulfils its promise it could well be a surprise package this Christmas.

The future is a bleak place. After a meteor hit the earth, the human race took to living in underground cities. The largest of these, Salto, is home to millions of people including Delavar, perhaps the most powerful person living here.



With its superb graphics, Excalibur looks much better than Telstar's previous releases



A refreshing change to play a game set in the past involving knights and swords

EA in World Cup Licence Shocker

Electronic Arts, one of several successful PlayStation football sim producers, has secured the World Cup 1998 licence.

Although FIFA 94 was a world beater on the 16-bit formats, the 32-bit FIFA 96 was a gross disappointment, coming a poor fifth in the PlayStation Pro footy game rankings behind Actua Soccer, Adidas Power Soccer, Striker '96 and Olympic Soccer.

Hopefully, EA won't make the same mistake again with FIFA 97 and FIFA 98. The World Cup final stage in France is expected to be the largest event in soccer history – if it isn't, something'll have gone amiss, as every

single one's out-largued the previous one so far.

'The World Cup is a highly strategic licence for EA Sports,' said Larry Probst, chairman and chief executive



officer of Electronic Arts.

'FIFA Soccer took the world by storm and has been the top-selling soccer game since its launch in 1993.

'The World Cup licence coupled with the marketing strength of the EA Sports brand makes for an extremely powerful combination. EA Sports is clearly positioned to continue to enhance its leadership position.'

FIFA 98 will have to improve on last year's PlayStation release to convince the magazine team of its worth as a match-winning football game.



Although brilliantly marketed, FIFA 96 somehow missed the mark as a football sim on the PlayStation



FIFA 97 will be previewed in issue 2 of PlayStation Pro

He was the man responsible for the Eden project, an ambitious plan to open a time portal back to the past and gain control of the mythical sword of King Arthur, Excalibur.

It has long been known that this legendary sword held magical powers, the power to unite men and bring about peace. However, peace is not Delavar's motive.

Men from the future were sent back to seize Excalibur. The magician Merlin's niece, Beth, is the only one capable of going back to the future to try to reclaim the legendary weapon.

Armed with a handful of spells and her trusty sword, she is perhaps the last hope for Arthur's people and for the future.

Excalibur features a stunning looking, third person, 3D engine that allows you to interact fully with the people and the objects of this strange world. With high definition graphics and an atmospheric soundtrack, **Excalibur** could well redefine the state of the art in arcade adventures.

Good value peripherals?

The **Memory Card Plus** provides 120 blocks of memory for only £39.99. Compatible with any PlayStation game that has a 'save game' option, it looks like Dattel – the company that took the 16-bit world by storm – has come up with the goods once again.

Another contender for a worthwhile addition to your PlayStation collection, is Dattel's floppy **PlayStation Disk Drive**. Retailing at £79.99, it enables you to save games onto cheap three and a half inch disks. Sounds like a great idea!

Coloured PlayStation grey and as slim and attractive as Kate Moss, it seems to be an ideal solution for anyone who's amassed a decent games collection.



Hint – strongly consider buying this memory card

Micro Machines shelved!

Codemasters has stunned the industry with news that its forthcoming PlayStation version of the flagship racing brand won't be officially released until spring next year.

Micro Machines V3 has been in development now for over two years, and the 16-strong team say that the delayed release date on the PlayStation will allow them to bring in both Saturn and PC CD-ROM versions for a simultaneous UK release.

It will also making sure that everything has been playtested to death and finely tuned to perfection come launch day.



What's more exciting than playing Pool – racing around the baize

Nick Wheelwright, Codemasters' managing director commented 'We will not be compromised on quality by time restraints, and we are not prepared to sacrifice elements of the game design to rush release the title'.

Codemasters has hatched a cunning series of advertisements to accompany the game's launch, featuring top tips on how to prevent cancer, lose weight and stop babies.

These bizarre bombardments will start hitting the country's computer magazines in early December. Watch out for a full review here in PlayStation Pro.

coming soon...

GUTS & GARTERS

Ocean

An all-out action adventure starring

two new heroes

is coming soon.

The action

begins from the

minute you

parachute down

onto Admiral Wort's private island and

it doesn't stop until you win – or die.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

Capcom Entertainment

Those world warriors are back... again!

As Capcom shows no sign of letting up



on this over-milked licence you can now indulge in the second Street Fighter bonanza

in a month or so. Old fighters meet

new ones with all-new combos.

JONAH LOMU RUGBY

Codemasters

Thirty international teams, a variety of

playing modes,

top notch A.I on

all of the rugby

players, plus

numerous cool

options and one

of the biggest names in rugby all

appearing in full motion captured form

should make this Codemasters sports

title a roaring success.



SPIDER

BMG Interactive

Believe it or not, you are a cybernetic

tarantula in this bizarre and highly

original 3D platform adventure. Your



mission is to

find the evil

people who

kidnapped

your human

body and try

and get changed back into a big butch

bloke once more. Ferret about down

sewer pipes, fight with scorpions and

spinning cyberwebs in order to avoid

mecha-wasps are just some of the

things you'll get to do in this crazy

PlayStation adventure. Groovy or wot?

I
love
my pound
of
flesh...



The Consumer

You got even. Now get

RE
LOADED
coming soon

Available on:



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news

coming soon...

ROCK N' ROLL RACING 2

Interplay

A big hit on the SNES a few years back, Interplay's futuristic racer is



back for some next generation fun later this year. Six new vehicles, 24 tracks,

multiple viewing angles, awesome new weapons and loads of aggressive gameplay all in one box. Let it rip.

PANDEMONIUM

BMG Interactive

Take control of the wacky duo comprising Nikki (a hyperactive acrobatic wizard's protege) and Fergus (a mad jester with his alter-ego stuck on the end of a stick). The game features freestyle camera technology, which means the viewing angles fly all over the shop, plus plenty of 3D fun for all the family.

MASS DESTRUCTION

BMG Interactive

From the creator of pinball extravaganza Tilt! comes this search and destroy military title that aims to blend the differing worlds of 2D and 3D to create one hell



of a corking combat game. From what we've seen so far, it looks like the boys at NMS are gonna pull it off successfully. We'll have a preview soon.

RELOADED

Gremlin

More blood-soaked mayhem for your PlayStation as Gremlin churns out a long awaited sequel to last year's smash hit, Loaded. Four of the original cast remain and are joined by two brand new warriors. The Consumer is a cannibalistic robobabe, whereas Sister Magpie is a cyber nun on a mission from God. Preview soon.

Back to the future

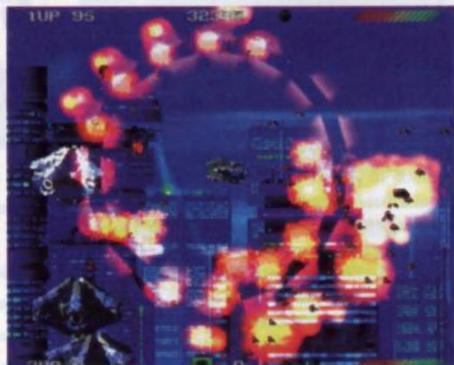
Remember Project X, the old Amiga shoot'em-up that sat atop of the Gallup games charts in 1993 for a solid 16 weeks? Well, it's coming back. Team 17, who originally created the sci-fi blaster, is back in the driving seat, busy putting the finishing touches on its monster PlayStation re-creation: X2. It has even got the original guys who did Project X to sort out this 1996 sequel.

When Andreas Tadic, Martyn Brown, Bjorn Lynne and Rico Holmes were developing the first game, they wanted to do so much more with it, but due to the restrictions of the old Amiga - and any other games platform available at the time - they couldn't.

What they did instead was store away those crazy ideas of multi-directional scrolling, 3D sprites and 32-bit alien blasting fun and waited for the next generation of machines to come along.

What you have now is one beautifully fast, tricky, addictive little blaster that hammers everything that has come before in the way of the old shoot'em-up genre, complete with unbelievable 32,000 colour visuals, superslick enemies piddling about on top of multiple parallax layers, awesome firepower and a storming techno soundtrack guaranteed to make your ears bleed.

It's amazing, it really is. Old school gameplay meets next generation horsepower and together they work in perfect harmony to supply all the missile-pumping action you need. This beast is pencilled in for a December release and we'll have a full in-depth review for you in our very next issue.



Very similar to the original Project X, but with fantastic graphics



As we've come to expect from shoot'em-ups, the explosions are mightily spectacular

Competition

Until then, why not try your luck with our X2 competition, where you can win not only copies of X2 and Team 17's top selling segmented strategy-fest Worms, but some groovy Sharp portable TVs (14" tinted tube with SCART sockets and FastText) and a funky SRS 3D Sound Hi-Fi too?

All you have to do is look at Team 17's 'mascot' Mr Gill in the picture below and then think of an amusing caption to fit in the speech bubble provided. The four best captions will walk away with either a telly or one of the Hi-Fi systems plus a copy of X2, and the next four hilarious entries will each get copies of X2 and Worms for their trouble. Simple enough? Well get on with it then!

SHARP
INTELLIGENT THINKING

Please mark your envelopes 'X2 Compo' and send them to the following address: **Freepost 3038,**

PlayStation Pro, IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, SK10 4YB

Entries must reach us before December 30, the editor's decision is final and if you don't want to rip up the magazine, photocopies are fine. Just don't start sending in multiples entries. If we suss you out, they'll all be going straight in the bin. Good luck to you all!



☐ Tick here if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies



Grave Reservations

Bristol is soon to be invaded. Not by aliens. Not by Germans, but by top discounting mail order/retail 'club' **Special Reserve**. On October 26 they're opening their biggest shop to date, promising to stock the entire range at 'low, low prices'. The opening will be marked by a day of boisterous celebration! The first 200 customers who enter after the 9.30am opening will receive free t-shirts and caps! But even more exciting than that is an opportunity to win a Pentium PC, a chance to try out all the latest games in store on all formats, and best of all, there'll be 'three hours of dancesome grooves and competitions from 3pm onwards' brought to you courtesy of Galaxy 101 FM. If you fancy a trip down to the 'entertainment centre' it's located at 349 Gloucester Road, in the Horfield area of Bristol.



Exclusive -
Special Reserve
blob seen above
the river Avon

F1 races into Pole Position!

If you listen very carefully, you can still hear the distant sound of champagne corks popping, even now. Yes, Psygnosis and Sony are well chuffed. They were granted the official Formula One licence a while back and spent months creating the perfect racing simulation, and then it was released.

And that's when everything went crazy. In its very first week of release, *F1* managed to sell in excess of 30,000 copies (30,000!!) thus making it not only the fastest selling CD of all time, but the biggest selling PlayStation game ever.

Capcom's horror-fest, *Resident Evil*, was the current chart champion having sold 20,000 copies in its first week, but the mighty *F1* beat it by a whopping 10,000.

Fact fans may be astonished to hear that it made over £1 million in retail sales in the first two days, took 68% of all PlayStation sales, 20% of all CD sales, 15% of total entertainment software sales and still managed to shift almost as many units than the entire cumulative sales of the remaining top 15 titles in the All Formats chart put together! Phew, is not the word.

Sony's UK sales director Doug Goodwin was obviously over the moon: "There's no doubt that the product has exceeded everyone's



expectations. Our strategy was to have five pillar titles for the fourth quarter of '96, of which *F1* is just the first, and there's no reason for us not to expect Tekken 2, WipEout 2097, Destruction Derby 2 and Crash Bandicoot to exceed the success of *F1*."

F1 - The most realistic PlayStation motor racing simulation?

This surely confirms the fact that the PlayStation is the best thing since sliced bread and thousands of newcomers are strengthening the point as the weeks go by.

Sales of the hardware are up, game sales are also rising, and rumours circulating that Sony is releasing cut-price software and a reduced price hardware package come Christmas time will surely increase the popularity of the PlayStation tenfold. Do not underestimate the power of the PlayStation.

The world-renowned Marlboro-sponsored McLaren team F1 car



Mamma wants buggy!



You got even. Now get

RE LOADED

coming soon

Available on:



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news

About Bloody Time

O riginally scheduled for release last March, Surrey-based Bullfrog's *Syndicate Wars* should be with us next January. Raved over by the console games press in previews months ago, everyone had almost forgotten about it. Theme Park and Hi-Octane from the same stable came out more or less on time and were solid enough releases.

Syndicate Wars, conversely, has been in development so long, we can all rightfully expect it to be an epic. If it's not, Bullfrog is going to be left with enough egg on its face to keep the entire population of Guildford in omelettes for years.

The follow-up to *Syndicate* (on the PC), *Syndicate Wars* continues where its predecessor left off, extending the chronology of *The Corporation*, which had achieved world domination by the end of the first game.

Players can choose to be one of the following – a corporation executive, a

church elder or a leader of a gang of greasy bikers.

Set in a fully 360 degree landscape, 'Wars' is unique in that everything you see can be blown up. You can swagger through a living, working city, leaving only smouldering rubble in your wake – if your gun's up to it.

Old favourites such as the Uzi, mini gun and flame thrower make a welcome return, and some violent new ones make their debuts.

A handheld laser pierces shields and gives out severe electric shocks, napalm mines cause serious singeing and razor wire is capable of cutting people in two.

'It has taken us a little longer that we hoped to do justice to *Syndicate Wars* on the PlayStation,' according to Bullfrog's powers-that-be. You can say that again. Until the next issue of PlayStation Pro, here's some screen-shots to be going on with.



Syndicate Wars continues where its predecessor left off. All your favourite weapons are featured plus a few new ones thrown in for good measure such as napalm mines and razor wire to name but two



Spot the conehead – Is it Saturn or Gamof? Find out next issue



Imagine a ridiculous voice bellowing out 'Staaar Gladiatorrr' and you're getting there

Gladiators ready...

You'll be pleased to hear that Capcom's latest fighting title has nothing whatsoever to do with the likes of Wolf, Hunter, Amazon and Vogue. In fact, it has nothing to do with anything connected with highly entertaining Saturday tea-time viewing.

Capcom, as you know, is famous for the Street Fighter brand. It was the pioneer of the 2D fighting genre in its infancy and has remained so throughout the many years (and subsequent consoles) that followed.

Now it's 1996 and it's finally leaving all 2D business behind. For a while at least.

Star Gladiator is its very first 3D beat'em-up and will be released over here in conjunction with licensees Virgin Interactive in January 1997. Hint – save some money after Christmas.

The whole story behind it all is based around something known as Plasma Power.

A certain Dr Bilstein has uncovered the secret of the 'sixth sense' and the infinite power within Plasma, but before he can conquer Earth with his new found firepower he's imprisoned.

Six years later, he has built himself a nifty little cyborg body suit and escapes from his cell, taking a group of tough Plasma fighters with him.

The worried Earth Federation members have only one hope of stopping Dr Bilstein invading the planet, and that's to find a bunch of warriors who can utilise the Plasma Power and use them against the evil Bilstein.

Will they survive? Will the evil Dr be defeated? Well, the only way you're gonna find out is to join us next issue when we'll be taking you on an in-depth tour of *Star Gladiator*, showcasing its characters, weapons, special moves and all that general street fighting guff. If you can handle the excitement, that is.



A switch-angle scenario along the lines of Toshinden, but with gameplay promising to be on a par with Tekken 2

Stop Press



■ Empire's Runcorn-based development team is currently applying the finishing touches to

Flying Corps for the PC. Tentative plans are afoot for a PlayStation release in the first quarter of next year. The staff at Empire



are so excited about it, they've all had personalised Flying Corps-style business cards printed.



■ Jas Mann out of Babylon Zoo – who did Spaceman – recently made his mark on the Rock Circus' famous 'Wall of hands' display. Well done son, shave off that goatee, though, eh? Rock Circus attracts

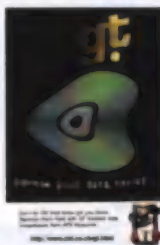
700,000 visitors annually – Jas's cast joins the likes of Jon Bon Jovi, Madonna and Cliff Richard (his cast is the wrinkly, yet virginal one).

■ September 6 saw the first edition of our million-selling sister magazine GamePro's new television series. Broadcast on Sportschannel in America, the 30-minute show went down a treat with the punters over the big pond. Kevin Cross,

Quick compression



Technical news alert! 'CD users can soon look forward to an end to the frustration of having to wait while their favourite game is loading,' according to Attention To Detail (ATD - web site <http://www.atd.co.uk>). Developers can now cut loading times 'by up to 75%.' With the compression system GT, the same high standard lossless compression as PKZIP is delivered. It unloads, however, at an outstanding 4Mb/sec on a DX2-66. Unlike PKZIP, GT is available for the PlayStation (and the Saturn) along with all 32-bit PC environments - ideal for cross platform game developers. The system comprises a 32-bit DOS compression program and a common API for all supported platforms. Martin Green, director of ATD research, explains, 'GT compresses data files by eliminating repeated strings of bytes from within the file. The system used is similar to the basic algorithms found in most of the LZW-derived compression programs - but with a simpler encoding scheme to maximise decompression speed. The simple decompression API results in effortless integration. 'Reducing load time to a quarter of the current average will be warmly welcomed by the games player and business user alike.'



Conquer season

Top news for action strategy fans is that the phenomenally popular PC game, **Command & Conquer** is about to show its face on the PlayStation. The game captured the imaginations of thousands of gamers on its first release, and will undoubtedly do the same again this time around.

The main backbone of the game is resource management but don't be put off, because it's wrapped in one of the most exciting and violent packages you'll

have ever experienced. Build up your forces using the factories you've constructed and then use your army to both defend the base and attack aggressive opponents.

The mission-based structure is excellently varied and removes any chance of becoming bored. There's the bonus of being able to complete the game in two different ways giving the option of playing again even when you've technically completed it. Virgin promises that the PlayStation version will be even more playable than its PC counterpart and will undoubtedly be both control pad and mouse compatible for ease of play no matter which method you prefer.

It's unlikely that game developer, Westwood, will be able to get **Command & Conquer** ready for the PlayStation before Christmas, but you can rest assured it'll be one of the first of the new games to hit the shelves in the New Year.



Small blokes have big egos. Ergo Hitler, Napoleon et al

Deep sea sequel

X-COM: Terror From the Deep is currently in development by Krisalis Developments on behalf of the MicroProse Studio in Chipping Sodbury, England. The game will be developed under the MicroProse brand and distributed worldwide.

'You don't have to be familiar with the award-winning X-COM series to enjoy **X-COM: Terror From the Deep** for the PlayStation game console', said Louis Gioia Jr, chief marketing officer of Spectrum HoloByte, Inc.

Based on the award-winning PC product and sequel to the classic X-COM: Enemy Unknown, the PlayStation version has enhanced sound effects and pits the player against aliens terrorising the earth. Seeking to take advantage of a weakened Earth, the X-COM deep space aliens unexpectedly change strategy and launch a powerful second front against Earth in the dark depths of vast oceans.

The long-sleeping creatures are awakened by re-animation signals sent out across the galactic silence by their interstellar brothers and sisters. Slowly, but surely, an army of formerly hibernating alien sea creatures attacks.

Look out for an array of undersea technology, rich graphics that feature water colouration, multi-level tactical maps with both underseascapes and buildings, an alien encyclopedia with mutation technology and new water creatures.



X-COM: Terror From the Deep has an actual undersea geoscape mapping system

Shock horror - an alien appearing in a console game



producer of Timeline Productions, commented, 'GamePro magazine gives gamers everything they'll ever need to know about the exciting world of gaming. We think GamePro TV is a natural for Sportschannel.'

GamePro

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or the
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news

Darkstalkers

The Night Warriors

An arcade smash for Capcom, but will this old school slapper pull any punches with its next gen conversion, or will it simply be a treat beyond belief, despite its distinctive lack of polygons?



Comedy electric shock tactics from Victor

Lord Raptor turns himself into Eddie from Iron Maiden upon winning the bout in style



As usual with fisticuff software, you always need a helping hand figuring out who does what and which fighters are the best bet to use. So in order to make life easier, here's a handy cut-out-and-keep guide to all the B-Movie batters on offer...

Following on from such great Capcom arcade classics as X-Men: Children Of The Atom and the never-ending series of Street Fighter titles comes this 2D beat'em-up packed full of colourful characters, flashy fireballs, spinning kicks and powerful uppercuts that have become the norm in fighting software circles. Virgin has secured the UK licence for many of the forthcoming Capcom titles and as a result, Darkstalkers is heading onto your PlayStation whether you like it or not. It's all basically your standard, side-on, multi character fighting bonanza and the only difference between this game and all of the aforementioned is – as usual – all the weird and wonderful selectable fighters on offer.

The game is set in a bizarre alternative reality where B-Movie horrors battle it out to become the champion of everything evil, and despite the rather run-of-the-mill yawn-worthy 'plot' everything is fairly entertaining throughout. All the various characters (a full listing is provided below) are superbly animated using the traditional 2D methods of old, and while each fighter has the usual massive array of special moves and hidden this and that, the sprites have been given a distinctive cartoony touch which

is both functional and occasionally amusing. Eyes pop from their sockets, electrified skeletons frazzle with a warm glow, and in true beat'em-up tradition, each fighter dances a merry jig upon pounding his opponent into the ground. It's all good family fun – well, for a while at least.

The main problem and ultimately the main gripe of many a games reviewer is that this type of beat'em-up is good, solid, action-packed entertainment, but as the world and his best mate are now turned on only by polygoned muscles and rendered destructive madmen, they simply don't appeal as much as they would have done, say, two years ago. They always seem to do well at the arcades and their 16bit conversions go down a storm with the folk hungry for more MK madness or the next SF2 instalment, but when it comes to the crunch these babies simply don't impress people enough nowadays. Which, if you think about it, is quite sad really.

Forgetting that the likes of Tekken and Toshinden don't exist for a while, Darkstalkers is a surefire rival for any slapfest on the market. 2D slapfests, that is. Both the Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat family trees have become old news



DEMETRI

This fireball pumping vampire is surely the 'Rya' of the darkstalking bunch. He's quick, fairly accurate and thankfully comes complete with several teleport moves allowing him to fly through opponents and attack from afar with ease. His close-up tactics, however, can cause some serious damage



MORRIGAN

Erm, bit tricky this one. I think she's a bat/vampire/devil type chick, but either way she's fully equipped with all the moves needed to cause massive impact. She's swift, and as her tail and wings are covered with plenty of pesky spikes, Morrigan's attacks really do need to be avoided at all costs



ANAKARIS

A special move bonanza this one. Although being quite slow in his movements, this big old Mummy has many, many crazy bandage-related attacks. Applying the block makes him retreat into his casket, and his super move takes on the form of an awesome Indian python spouting from his innards – which is nice...

FELICIA

Felicia has the ability to turn herself into a flying furball of claws which is nigh-on impossible to defend your self against, plus, when she's finishing the furball move, she'll lash out with several energy-zapping scratches. By the way, she's a speedy little cat-woman. Just in case you hadn't noticed



VICTOR

Large, cumbersome and very powerful, Victor is Frankenstein's monster incarnate. He mainly relies on his brute strength to get the job done, but does have some handy long range electrified punches and kicks to help him out against the swifter challengers



JON TALBAIN

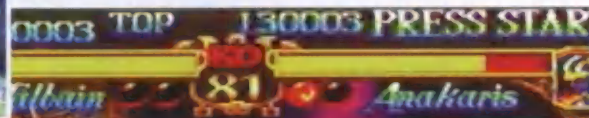
Obviously a character who has spent far too much time on the dark side of the moon, Talbain is a weird and wacky werewolf who relies on close-up kicking and punching to get results. He can turn himself into a flaming projectile (M.Bloon anyone?) and comes with a nifty Gille-esque flash kick too



One of the many bandage special moves from our mummified chum fails to make contact with good old wolfboy



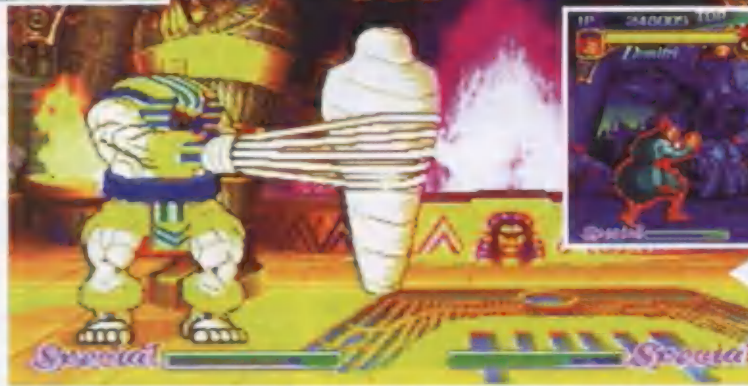
Can you feel the force? Morrigan gets the full impact of Victor's extended energy blast



Vampire Demetri finally gets his revenge on Frankenstein's freaky fiend

with many games players by now, and this fiendish and somewhat cunning variation on the tired old beat'em-up formula makes a refreshing change and is as instantly playable as any you care to place before it. But the likes of Tekken and Toshinden can only be forgotten for a short while. They are the benchmark in one-on-one fighting titles at present, and no matter which way you look at it, good old Darkstalkers with its humorous touches, new and original characters and mind boggling special moves and combos, doesn't make the grade.

Punters - if I may be so bold as to label you as such - always want more. You want the newest software boasting the latest technological treats combined with realistic graphics, ear bashing sounds and plenty of crazy stuff rammed in there that'll make you sit up and beg as soon as you clap eyes on it. You do, don't you? You know you do. No matter what game is put in front of you, you'll always want it to look as good as it does in the amazingly rendered introduction sequence, and the way things are going that will soon be feasible. But - and this is a big but - most gamers simply aren't prepared to wait. They want the moon on a stick and they'll scream and scream and scream until ►



Egyptian Anakaris demonstrates the power underneath his mucky rage



Alien entity, Pyron lets loose a couple of extra terrestrial hoops



Can you spot the discrete SF2 connections? Good old Capcom



Ryu fireballs ahey as Demetri vamps it up for little Felicia



LORD RAPTOR

This rock 'n' ghoul star is the undead zombie of the bunch and hobbles across the screen accordingly. He has a fair few close-up moves, a teleport option, plus if you fiddle around with the controls for long enough, you'll discover that he can transform parts of his body into deadly chainsaws and whopping great swords. Blimey



RIKUI

You've heard of mermaids, right? Well, this dude is a merman and as such, he has several fishy tricks with which to pummel you. Stinky gill gases, spiked projectiles and high-pitched sonic blasts are just some of the underwater oddities that'll be coming your way if you get on the wrong side of this slippery customer



HUITZIL

Right, this bloke is one of the 'hidden' boss characters, and as such he has access to many different attacks and handy death-bringing tools. Huge circular saws, missiles and numerous other robotic devices all spring from his armoured torso and can be annoyingly difficult to avoid. A robotic rapscallion, if you will

SASQUATCH

A hairy beast with more brute force than brains. Big foot's baby brother may be slow, but he's got the added reach to attack from a distance, plus several projectiles too. Variations on the frozen laser blast move he performs can result in him eating opponents and gobbling out the chewy bits in disgust. Top stuff



BISHAMON

Despite his bizarre name, Bishamon is one of the toughest characters to beat - especially when the CPU is in charge. This Samurai killer has numerous sword wielding slashes up his sleeves plus the ability to slice his opponents clean in half with the flick of his wrist. And he's quite nippy too



PYRON

The final boss character is the alien entity, Pyron. This little buggar zips about all over the shop in various orb guises, and is so fast that his attacks come as short, sharp, shocks on most occasions. Again, he's got loads of projectiles and super moves, but your best bet is to avoid him and attack from as far away as possible



Darkstalkers

► they're sick if they don't get the goods, and every product that surfaces in the meantime will be frowned upon simply because today's technology is moving so damn fast.

Darkstalkers is one such product. Capcom has taken its original Street Fighter engine and reworked it entirely, resulting in better graphics, better sounds, better characters, better moves and ultimately, tried its hands at installing some better gameplay. Unfortunately, the whole caboodle isn't able to stand up to the almost certain onslaught of comparisons, and as a reflection of that, my final

score for this game will be affected. It's not something I personally agree with, but I ain't the boss and I'm paid to give you an overall professional opinion, not tell you what I like playing around with.

Anyway, Tekken 2 it ain't, but if you want a piece of software that will remind you of the far away days of yesteryear when games were a good laugh to play and being the champ over a best-of-three-bout challenge with your mate was the only thing worth bothering with, by all means check out Darkstalkers. Who knows, you may just be pleasantly surprised. Whether you'll still have this same feeling of dew-eyed nostalgia when Capcom unleashes another four or five similar beat'em-up titles later on in the year, remains to be seen.

Huitzil has the ability to remove huge items from inside his magic pockets. A bit like Sport Billy



For your interest, here's the incredibly technical character selection screen. We think you'll agree it's amazingly colourful and a joy to view to boot



Morrigan splits in two for one of her moves and treats Victor to a double flash kick experience

Morrigan gets to the point with Merman Rikku on his junglist front lawn



Alien oddity, Pyron pummels Demetri to a pulp and then turns into a corn-on-the-cob, for a laugh



Phew! Rikku's essence of Scampi Fires and crab sticks burn the nose hairs of a nearby vampire

Demetri stands victorious over Bishamon in what seems to be a B&Q Santa's Grotto. How bizarre!



PRO SCORE

GAME Darkstalkers
CONTACT 0171-368 2222

GENRE Beat'em-up
RELEASE DATE October

SOFTWARE HOUSE Capcom/Virgin
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 9

If you're after a top arcade conversion with plenty of SF2 gameplay, Darkstalkers fits the bill nicely. It oozes playability and will guarantee hours of fun, but it has to be said that it doesn't exactly stretch the PlayStation to its limits and as a result, some gamers may feel slightly cautious about spending any hard earned cash on it. However, if you can't stand playing what is sadly now considered a 'dated' style of game, you'd better hang on for Tekken 3 or something wildly technologically advanced like that

8
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE Good quality beat'em-up in the Street Fighter mould. A nice change from all that 3D nonsense

ANDY Good old Capcom. Yet another take on Street Fighter. Stop it now!

ALEX Very similar to Street Fighter Alpha/Zero, but the protagonists just don't have the same panache

DO NOT SEAL
 DO NOT SEAL
 DO NOT SEAL
EVIDENCE
 DO NOT SEAL
 DO NOT SEAL

SHERIFF'S REPORT

TYPE OF CASE	Investigation
APPROXIMATE DATE	01/01/96
REPORTING OFFICER	JOHN DOE
REPORTING OFFICER'S NO.	12345
REPORTING OFFICER'S NAME	JOHN DOE
REPORTING OFFICER'S ADDRESS	12345 Main St, Anytown, CA 90210
REPORTING OFFICER'S PHONE	(555) 123-4567
REPORTING OFFICER'S FAX	(555) 123-4567
REPORTING OFFICER'S E-MAIL	john.doe@anytown.ca
REPORTING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE	[Signature]
REPORTING OFFICER'S TITLE	Sheriff
REPORTING OFFICER'S DEPARTMENT	Anytown Sheriff's Office
REPORTING OFFICER'S DIVISION	Investigation
REPORTING OFFICER'S SUPERVISOR	JOHN DOE
REPORTING OFFICER'S SUPERVISOR'S NO.	12345
REPORTING OFFICER'S SUPERVISOR'S NAME	JOHN DOE
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EXHIBIT 2A

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EVIDENCE
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EXHIBIT 30 B

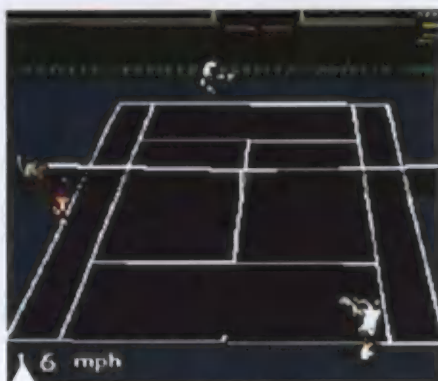
SONY



DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

Break Point

Introducing today's topic of discussion – 'Why can't anyone serve up an ace tennis game for the PlayStation?' Let's have a heated debate



Break Point has no official licence, so there aren't any authentic courts or real players



The action is just a bit slow to get seriously engrossed for any length of time



Do the untrained eye, Break Point plays like tennis games should. Control over shot power and direction is in your court, as it were, and although it's not the most instant tennis game, after half an hour's gameplay you'll be pulling off shots you'll never even dream of in real life.

The abilities of the male and female players are accurate to real life, although their respective sizes have been tweaked – in other words, the females have been stretched to varying degrees.

Dawn Springall, who provided most of the movement for the women, is only 5' 4", whereas Chris Bailey is about 6' 6". The women have been stretched a little to a simulated size of 5' 7". Noticeably, the gauraud-shaded men are capable of monster serves and tonking ground strokes and volleys, whereas the women are altogether more sedate although pretty damn nippy around the court.

Break Point has a replay feature worthy of positive comment. If ever there's a close line call, the rally leading up to the controversial moment is replayed from an angle above the court, following the ball. The replay can then be controlled with a d-

pad from six different angles and advanced frame-by-frame. This option can be turned off altogether if you desire, although a sharp press of the Start button takes you back to whichever player was due to serve for the next point.

What Smart Dog, the development team behind Break Point, has avoided is offering a multiplicity of unplayable view angles. A sensible three angles are given – the standard Wimbledon camera angle, a slightly closer-in version of this which moves slightly with the trajectory of the ball and a behind-the-player view. The third option is only available in single player.

On the subject of players, they look more like basketball professionals than tennis players, although if you saw 6' 6" beanpole Chris Bailey, the ex-pro who was used for the motion capture, you may think he missed his true vocation.

The trend on the professional tennis tour circuit in recent years has been for tall, fast-serving men such as Pete Sampras, Boris Becker and Goran Ivanisevic, but in Break Point there are no Michael Changs or Andre Agassiss. Each male character is

Sporting motion capture

A load of reflective balls are stuck on people's arms, legs, head and body with velcro and black masking tape. When the person moves around, the information from the movement of the balls is translated onto computer in the form of 3D dot-to-dot wire frame images.

It sounds simple enough, but if any of the cameras set up are knocked even slightly – by a stray ball for example – a lot of time has to be spent re-calibrating them before a further round of motion capture can begin.

Tim Child, managing director of Matrix Studios, where the motion capture was done for Break Point, commented: 'This system is used for accurate and faithful capture of what your models are giving. However, sometimes you need to capture something that the model didn't give. Also you may need to make some adjustments to get back to what we call the default position.'

'Because the system is so accurate it also captures things you don't want. We're building either sprites or full textured polygons and want all these things to join together seamlessly. As we know, they join together as a number of default regions – either default standing, default running or whatever.'

'A human being is pretty good at kicking off from a default position, but it's very difficult to get back to that position. So the motion editor is used when necessary to edit back to default. It's quite an expensive item of equipment!'





This viewpoint is the best one by far. The camera moves smoothly with the trajectory of the ball

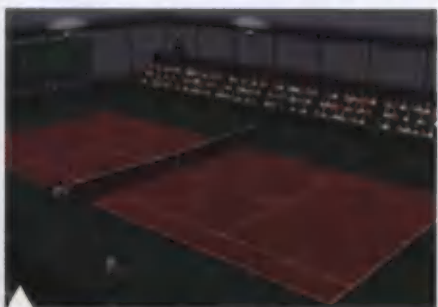
Mick Jagger/Iggy Pop skinny and the women look more like bony supermodels than the muscle-bound likes of Steffi Graf or the more chunky Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario.

Staying with Break Point's aesthetics, the net cord (or should that be net industrial tubing?) is far too thick and blocky. A great deal more attention should have been given to this as the court surfaces and markings are incredibly realistic in comparison.

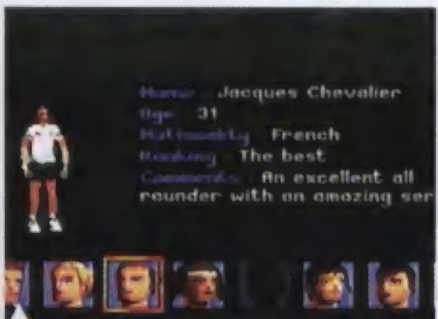
To put the net cord's size into perspective, it's wider than the player at the top of the screen. I was surprised, therefore, that after over three hours' play, not a single shot had clipped the net although the odd serve did.

This brings the review nicely to an assessment of the serving set-up. A single tap of the X button makes your player toss the ball and another brings his racquet arm crashing down, sending the sphere screaming towards the player cowering on the other side of the net. At least that's the theory. In practice, however, things are a little different.

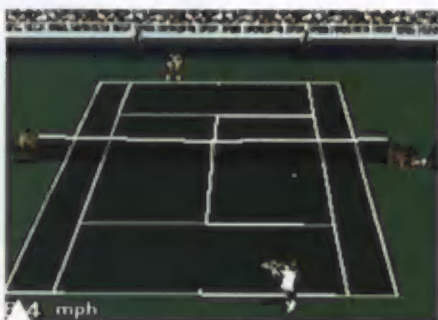
The ball-toss and serving motion cannot be ►



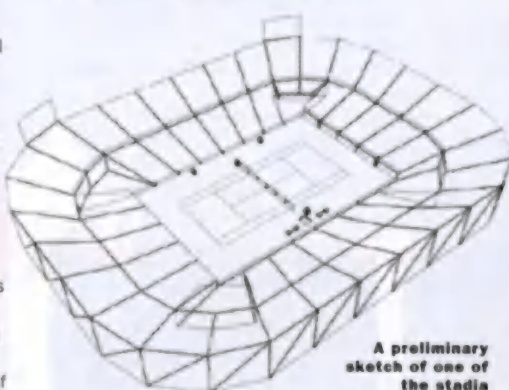
The indoor court is one of the more visually appealing locations, although it can often be the backdrop to defeat



You can't select the same player as your opponent, so if the loser hasn't picked Chevalier he's got an instant excuse



The CPU players are virtually impossible to lob as they hardly ever venture from the baseline



A preliminary sketch of one of the stadia featured within Break Point



Ever wondered what the inside of a top tennis player looks like? Or how he could possibly play wearing those trainers?



Attack the net when you're playing against a CPU opponent, as it can only cope with rallies from the baseline

Is there a future for British tennis?



Chris Bailey, once ranked British number two and four times member of the British Davis Cup team, says: 'It's up to the LTA. What is getting better is coaching. More money is being spent, ex-pros are being employed as coaches, which they didn't do in the past.'

'Tim Henman will certainly break into the top 50 and that's without question. It depends on what sort of pressures are put on him in the way of sponsorship and from the press.'

'He has the talent to go into the top 20. If you look at all the top guys nowadays they all have one big shot. He's 6' 1", which is big enough, but he's not as big, muscular-wise, as some of the top players which I know that he's working on. If he does develop a big serve or a big forehand, he could go all the way. He has an ex-pro, David Felgate, travelling with him.'

'We have to get the standard of grass roots coaching better, so if we have a young guy of 9 or 10 and he comes into a club, he can be taught by a coach who knows how to teach the game properly and knows how to produce somebody who, by the time he's 14, has the right technical aspects to his game.'

'To a degree, by the time I was 17 I was technically deficient in a lot of areas. Really, I was starting all over again at 17 which was too late.'



The holiday resort court where a lot of the semi-finals are held. You won't be put off by crowd noise here

Break Point

► successfully achieved consistently as the timing varies depending on whether you're serving from the top or the bottom of the screen. This criticism can be side-stepped if you select the behind-your-player perspective as the view remains consistent regardless of which end of the court you are serving.

Playing a match from this angle however, is ultimately disappointing and unsatisfying as it is very difficult to judge the speed of your opponent's shots and also to ascertain exactly how near the net or the baseline you are.

What slightly makes up for the X serve problems is that if you serve using the triangle button, you're guaranteed a 100% success rate, as a single tap is enough to send the ball over the net and into the correct serving box.

In other words, there is absolutely no excuse for serving a double fault as you just go for the soft option of the triangle button if your first serve's adjudged a fault by the rather camp-sounding umpire.

In defence of the X button timing problems, if you

do swing and miss a few times you're not penalised in any way and this can have a particularly demoralising effect on your opponent as he hasn't a clue not only where the ball will land but also when it'll finally come over the net.

When receiving a serve – each of which is automatically timed and immediately flashed up at the foot of the screen – your positioning is vitally important. When you first play Break Point, the second most annoying thing (after serving) is the fact that a shot from your opponent will hit your player, his reply being nothing more than a dull grunt as the ball drops at his inwardly-pointing feet.

You'll also find that you're too late to many shots. Timing and positioning in real tennis however, is of utmost importance and there's no denying that the same applies to Break Point. After about 40 minutes' gameplay this is something you'll begin to appreciate. So long you get the player near the ball and make the shot early, the results are sometimes spectacular.

Correctly predicting where your opponent's shot will land becomes an important part of your armoury, as an early return will usually result in a harder, more accurate and therefore far more damaging shot – Break Point's best feature.

Dave's famous last words

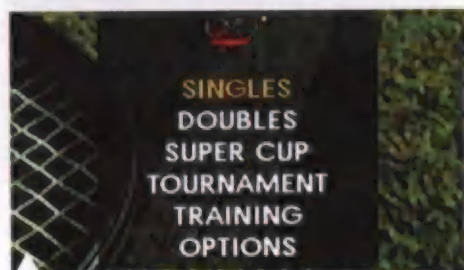


When I went to Matrix Studios I spoke to Dave Thompson, the brains behind Smart Dog, about the motion capture. One of the things I noticed was that they had motion captured a left-handed woman and a right handed man.

I asked Dave if this was deliberate. He replied: 'No, it just happened that way. We'll flip the data so you can have mixed-handed male and female players. It's going to be quite easy to do.' Woops



Even the highest-ranked players aren't particularly mobile across court



Winning or finishing runner-up in a Super Cup is rewarded by a gold or silver cup. Two golds and two silvers is all you need to progress to the next circuit

Five rather robotic-looking, tennis playing women



PRO SCORE

GAME Break Point
CONTACT 0161-832 6833

GENRE Sports sim
RELEASE DATE November

SOFTWARE HOUSE Ocean
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 7

Any sports simulation using motion capture technology can only really be as good as the players it motion captures – Actua Soccer being a good case in point. While Chris Bailey, Dawn Springall and Emma Roderick are undoubtedly technically proficient tennis players, they're not world-beaters. Exactly the same can be said of the game as a whole – a solid, yet unspectacular performer. I'm still waiting for a PlayStation tennis game that really excites me, although Break Point has come nearest.

7
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE Can't see the appeal myself. The most frustrating game experience I've had in ages

ANDY To be fair this looks much as you would expect only it plays far worse than any game of its kind. Ever

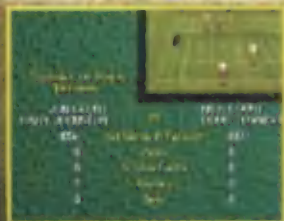
JAY Fairly good, although serving, returning the ball and reaching difficult volleys can prove wildly tough

"Shhhh! He really thinks he's playing tennis..."



...perhaps he is!"

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wipEout2097

Trippy visuals, bangin' tunes, adrenaline rushes... no it's not your typical night in round at Ravey Davey Gravy's house, but Liverpool-based Psygnosis' latest – and indeed greatest – anti-gravity futuristic g-force racer. So you can put them glo-sticks away for starters...



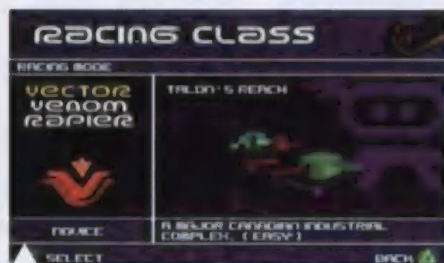
Wuite possibly the game that made the PlayStation so popular in its infancy, wipEout not only introduced new gamers into the market, but also put Psygnosis firmly on the map as a top drawer PSX developer. It took the current musical trends, the latest in videogame technology and some of the best game designers in the business, threw them all together and successfully managed to create a futuristic vision of videogaming extremes. Then they plonked it all into one technicolour package of pure adrenaline and let it loose on the general public. And they loved it.

Sony has aimed squarely at the older end of the games market with the PlayStation and with most of its software. Small children twisting their parents' arms is always a steady source of income in the games industry, but Sony wanted the older kids, the ones with jobs, the ones who liked a good time, had spare cash and enjoyed experiencing – how shall I put this? – 'other' recreational activities. Dance music has become the new rock and roll and the arrival of Sony's new home arcade meant that the people going to clubs could come home and chill out in front of something visually pleasing and something that they could interact with while being bombarded by some hardcore drum 'n' bass. And nothing fitted the bill better than wipEout.

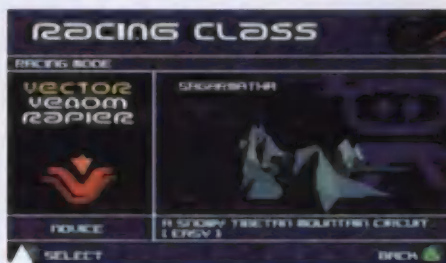
The smoothness of the graphics, the pounding dance tracks and the sheer speed of the thing had people rocking in their chairs all over the country and it quickly became a top selling hit for Liverpool-based developer Psygnosis. Once it had the success of the original game, its next task was to create something even better and I'm happy to announce that it's succeeded yet again.

This new version isn't simply wipEout with a few extra touches in the vein of sequels like Ridge Racer Revolution. This time the company has gone to town on it, changed things around, made it more

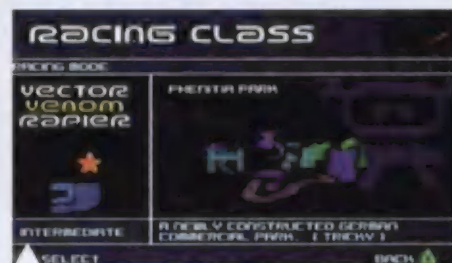
Put some wax on the tracks and slide on outta here!



The Vector Class is considered ideal for novices, as this is the slowest of all the racing classes. This first track for example, is simple to master



The second Vector track is fairly simplistic, allowing you to get to grips with the handling of your craft and gain enough racing confidence

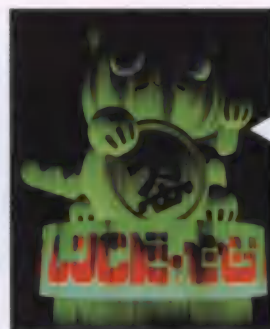


Venom is the intermediate class of those on offer and therefore more suitable for the experienced player. The tracks can get very tough though

Blunt crayons and potato prints



As with the original *wipeOut*, Psygnosis has drafted in graphic supremoes, *The Designers Republic*, to spruce up the proceedings. The new and improved option screens are all down to them, plus some awesome sections of the front-end introduction sequence. Groovy man!



Say hello to the new *wipeOut* 2047 race mascot, Luck-EE. He's a robotic moggy, in case you haven't noticed

playable, easier to control etc etc etc.

Take the new tracks for example. One of the main problems with the original was its difficulty setting. Sure enough you'd scrape into first position on a few of the tracks, but it was extremely tricky to progress any further without some serious thumb-blistering time spent in front of the telly. Now you'll find it relatively easy in comparison to breeze through most of the immediately selectable race tracks, leaving the odd one or two that'll test your g-force prowess. This allows you to get to grips with everything before you start to conquer the game, which is a nice little twist that I'm sure *wipeOut* virgins will appreciate.

The handling of the crafts is much more user-friendly than before too, giving you a much better chance of taking those wildly tight bends with ease as opposed to smashing into them every lap. Overtaking opposition is therefore easier too, as is getting past crafts which you've managed to hit with one of your many weapons. Beforehand, you'd let loose a homing missile, it'd hit the target, but then when you caught up with it you'd find yourself ramming into the back of it instead of zipping by the take the glory. This thankfully has now been corrected by the scouse supremos.

The main pain in the butt for me though was the way your craft would virtually grind to a halt when you bumped into anything, losing race positions and time on the clock. This, as with many other gripes and moans put forward against the original, has been sorted. No longer do you skid to a halt. Admittedly you slow down and seem to stop somewhat, but you'll find it a lot easier to get back into the swing of things and accelerate after your opponents than you did before.

Damage is another aspect of the game that has been fiddled with. Spend too much time pranging your craft around the tighter corners or become ►



Racers now have the ability to fire their missiles not only from the front end of their craft, but the back too. Be on your guard!



Energy shield failing? If so, take a trip around the pitstop bends to boost it back up



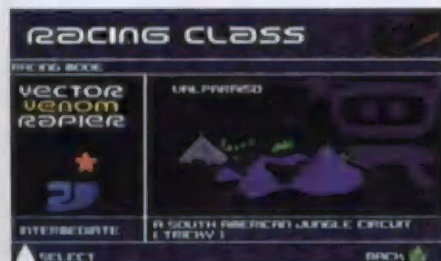
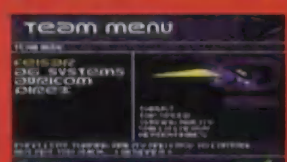
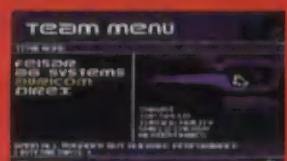
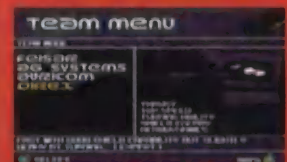
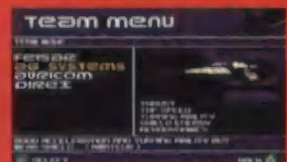
All craft now come with some impressive thruster flares. It makes them easier to spot too



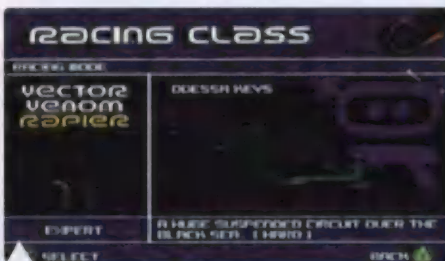
As with the original, if you fly over the big blue arrows on the track, you'll be treated to a short, but sweet speed boost. Which is nice...

Smells like team spirit

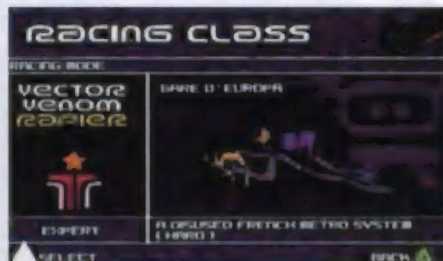
Four selectable racing teams are available, offering varying thrusts, top speeds and the like



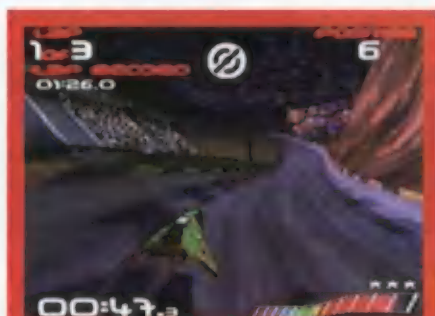
Of course, if you fail any of the races you can automatically restart whenever you want. Believe me, you will be restarting quite a few of them



The final racing class is Rapier. To finish these in first position and progress on to the next set of courses requires lots of patience and skill



You'll need to practise these final two tracks like mad if you want to move on. Take your time to suss out every bend and turn that lies ahead



It may not look that different to you mate, but...

...it bloody well is! Casual passers-by may not realise wipEout2097's polished graphics and might be fooled into thinking it's not that big an improvement on the first game. So to make you sit up and shout "Wow, he's right. They are better aren't they?", here on the top we have the original wipEout, and just below there's the new and improved 2097 version. See what I mean?



wipEout2097

► the unfortunate victim of a handful of enemy attacks and you'll pull out of the race and eventually burst into flames. That is unless you take advantage of the pits. Yes, Psygnosis has added a touch of F1 sensibility to the game, allowing you to top up your craft's energy bar by gliding through the pit area during a race. You don't need to stop or anything, simply drive over the pit lane and sparks will fly and you'll pop out the other end full replenished.

Speaking of sparks, gently clip certain parts of the tracks and instead of bumping off or stopping, you'll find yourself witnessing one of the many new graphical touches applied to wipEout2097. Namely a bunch of groovy looking sparks as your ship grinds around the perimeter barriers. They look cool enough and seem to enhance that "Phew!" Factor which features so strongly whilst buzzing around this improved version of the PlayStation fave.

Another example that demonstrates the aforementioned "Phew!" Factor are the new pick-upable weapons. For example, one particular icon sets off an automatic pilot control system when you bash your relevant button, leaving you a hands-free ride around the course for a good few seconds. Obviously there's not much use using this on a straight, so if you can, try and keep hold of it until you know that there's a rather tricky section of the track coming up, unleash it and breeze through it with relative ease.

So after all these tweaks has Psygnosis made it all a tad too easy now? Well, a bit, but it's still pretty darn tough. Once you've mastered the first six tracks and received Gold Awards for each of them, the difficulty steps up a notch as you progress onto

the next series of twisty turny tunnels and insane race courses. And it here where the men get separated from the boys. The thing with wipEout2097 is that some people can play it for days and still not get anywhere, whereas others simply breeze along, have a quick go and end up getting further on it than the first guy. It's a tricky game and by no means an easy ride, but it's definitely got something for everyone to fall in love with.

I won't go on at length about the numerous tracks or the collectable weaponry (I've done that elsewhere!) but let me just say that some of the new missiles etc are stunning – especially the Quake Distructors that send a huge tidal wave right along the track, flipping racers here and there and resulting in a sizeable explosion. And it's features such as this that make Psygnosis' latest effort the ultimate space-age race title. Certain developers have tried to create the same wipEout feel and have succeeded to a certain degree, but it now looks like no-one is going to take away g-force crown atop of Psygnosis' curly perm.

The boys from Liverpool have done us proud once more. They've given us more of what we wanted, added some superb new weapons, an abundance of thrilling new courses, improved space crafts, all-round faster supersonic racing action, a soundtrack that reads like the line-up for the next Tribal Gathering and they've even taken time out to listen to all the games players' moans and gripes about the original game – and acted on them with a passion. All of which will no doubt result in tens of thousands of adrenaline addicts super-glued to the telly once again, rocking around in their chairs with techno blasting down our ears, and they'll all be eternally grateful. Nice one, Psygy, you've created yet another perfect piece of entertainment.



On those tight and twisty bends, try and make use of your additional turning abilities via your L1 & R1 shoulder buttons



The three-way fire rockets you can collect while racing are incredibly cool. It only takes a casual aim to make sure they hit their intended target

Hang on, where's the bloody cigarette lighter?



MINES

These babies fall out from the back end of your craft and inflict muchos damage on anyone who's stupid enough to fly into them, but can be destroyed by the all mighty Thunder Bombs



E-PAK

Pick this up during racing and your complete energy force field will be boosted dramatically. Quite handy if you've got a load of opponents right behind firing away like mad men



AUTOPILOT

This activates the Auto Pilot, which funnily enough, drives the craft for you. It only lasts for a few seconds though, so watch out for the 'DISENGAGING' sign when it's about to run out



TURBO BOOST

A bit like Ronseal Woodstain, this does exactly what it says on the tin. Hit the button and your craft will be given a turbo boost over a short period. It's not wise to use it on the bends though



ROCKETS

These terrain-huggin beasts fire in a group of three from the front of your ship. They'll only go in a straight line though, so if you want them to hit their target make sure you're not on a bend



MISSILES

As opposed to the rockets, these only fire one at a time. But they do have a lock-on heat seeking device which allows them to follow the target for a short while before connecting. You can fire them backwards too if you like



ELECTRO BOLT

Similar to the rockets, these cause the target crafts to stall when hit and leave them difficult to handle for a while. They also have a handy lock-on facility too, making it almost impossible to miss the bloke in front with them first go



THUNDER BOMBS

A small nuclear explosion is the best way to describe these I think. When triggered they will send out a huge dome of destruction which will inflict massive damage on all visible racing craft



SHIELD

Collect one of these as you're under attack and you can laugh at the rockets bouncing off the windscreen because you'll be safe under a force field shield. Watch out though, they don't last for long and can run out quite unexpectedly



PLASMA BOLT

Take your time with these as not only are they hard to fire successfully, but they don't become available too often either. They need to be charged up before using, but thankfully destroy all craft on impact, eliminating them from the race



QUAKE DISRUPTOR

A bit like the BFG in Doom, the QD is the most sought-after weapon. When activated it'll send off a massive exploding ripple effect around the track destroying crafts and leaving you giggling your head off as your opponents get flipped all over

Dance if you wanna dance...

As with the original wipEout, Psygnosis has got together with the boys at Virgin Music and is planning on releasing another music CD to accompany the new game. And just like the last one, it features the cream of the current dance music crop with big names such as The Prodigy, Fluke, The Chemical Brothers, Underworld, Photek and The Future Sound Of London all supplying exclusive remixed tracks especially for the album.

You can seek it out in a record shop near you soon, but to tide you over until then you could always go and join the fun on the wipEout2097 Club Tour that's due to start on October 18.

Psygnosis, in conjunction with Virgin Music and in-game sponsor Red Bull are holding special one-off wipEout parties at some of the country's top nightspots offering not just the chance for party goers to have a quick play on the new game on a massive telly in one of the main rooms, but also the chance to take part in the awesome wipEout2097 audio/visual experience.

There will be state-of-the-art projectors and lighting equipment hanging around all over the shop, plus a huge wipEout space ship for you to hump into, and on certain nights The Chemical Brothers will be performing live onstage to a throbbing mass of tanked-up revellers.

Fancy it do you? Well if you want to check it all out for yourself, here are all the planned venues for the tour. Have fun, and don't forget to drink lots of water.

Slough	Full Circle	Oct 27
Manchester	Bugged Out *	Nov 1
Liverpool	Cream *	Nov 2
Glasgow	Slam	Nov 8
Reading	Check Point Charlie	Nov 15
Leeds	Pleasure Rooms	Nov 16

Note: The Chemical Brothers will only be appearing at the above venues marked *



PRO SCORE

GAME wipEout 2097
CONTACT 0151 282 5000

GENRE Racing
RELEASE DATE October

SOFTWARE HOUSE Psygnosis
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 9
SOUND 9
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 9

It's fast enough to satisfy the speed junkies, colourful enough to please the acid casualties and the soundtrack will have any self-respecting chemical brother shaking his booty until the early hours. Gameplay wise, it's better all round with easy to master controls, improved handling and a gradual difficulty curve allowing experts and novices equal amounts of fun. It's generally more sexy than the original in almost every aspect - especially speed - so if you like your fun fast, frantic and full of space cadets, buy this today.

9
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE Surprisingly it's even better than the original. Better music too. Less Cold Storage, more proper stuff

ANDY An improvement on the already classic original in every department. An absolute treat for all

ALEX To be played on a massive screen with the music on full blast - a pity Firestarter is an instrumental

StrikePoint

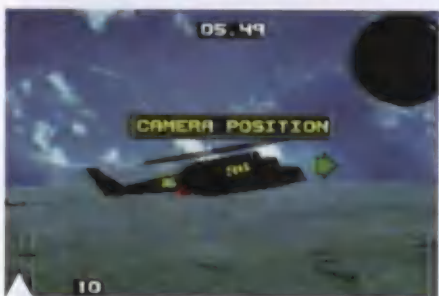
MicroProse has done it, Core has done it, Virgin has had a go too. Now it's time for the boys at Elite to whip out their super-charged choppers and wave them at a prospective audience



Certain missions require you to attack enemy base HQs and destroy them



Some of the Arctic levels are pretty tricky, especially as they're all snowy



If you want, you can play around with the camera angles for a perfect view



Awesome looking sunsets and breath taking cloud effects are popular features throughout

The HEX Organisation has many hostages hidden in its numerous air bases. You must find them!



Okay, so we've already had quite a bunch of helicopter games hit the market over the past month or so, but give Elite a fair crack of the whip eh? It's not just blindly dived headfirst onto the rotorblade bandwagon and churned out the same old tired simulation. Oh no. Elite has aimed for a slightly different angle with StrikePoint, one which tends to lean more towards a 3D version of old classics such as Choplifter, rather than take the Krypton Factor route.

You are the head boy in a group of able and very much trigger happy pilots who make up the newly formed StrikePoint team. Your main goal is to seek out and defeat the devious HEX organisation who, by planting several 'Shockwave' devices here and there, are attempting to destroy the Eco-Sphere. So basically, you hammer around in your superduper flying machine collecting these untriggered devices while simultaneously scrapping with the aforementioned organisation of bad blokes over a series of sweaty palm-inducing missions and huge sprawling levels. So far so good.

Your chopper is – as usual – equipped with all the firepower you need, with additional ammunition casually lying around each level just waiting to be picked up by your good self. The press release accompany-

ing StrikePoint announces that you have nine selectable helicopters to choose from during play, but back at Reality Ranch, the harsh truth transpires that it's only three. You can simply change the paint jobs to three various designs on all of them, thus making 'nine selectable helicopters'. Cheers. Anyway, the varying differences in each of the aircraft boils down to speed, armour and not a lot else. Well, not a lot else unless you're one of those people who is really into helicopters and can twitter on at length about altitude meters and cockpit interiors I suppose.

So, once you've picked which airborne beauty you'd like to ride, now you have to choose which game you want to play. Here you have as many options as you do selectable aircraft (that's three by the way) with the first being the bog standard single player mode where you take on the enemy all by yourself. Next up is the two player option which has you and a partner of your choosing joining forces and setting about the skies in a vertical split-screen formation, and trying to do the same things you tried earlier on your own. The third and final option is battle mode. Two players are required, but choice is again in your favour as you can either have a sort of time trial with your

Blimey, look at the pixels on that!



Most video games nowadays have a swish looking introduction sequence to drool over – and Strikepoint is no exception



Look out for the green arrows. They'll point you the right way, allowing you to attack with ease



A split-screen two player battle is a top giggle with a trigger-happy chum. Rockets everywhere!



As well as targets on the ground, you'll also have to deal with annoying airborne enemies



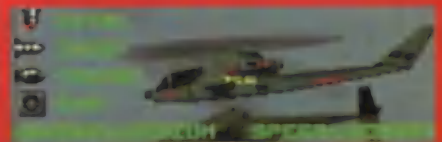
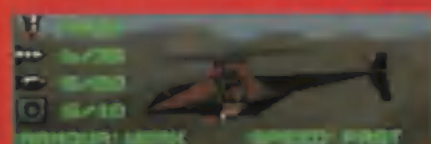
opponent to see who can complete the levels quickest, or alternatively you can simply fly around and try and blast hell out of one another and see who hits the floor first. Which is all good fun.

As you can imagine, the battle mode can be a top laugh with a friend, but it's the single player option where the real challenge lies. You have 10 different levels offering various mission objectives ranging from buzzing around the Antarctic destroying SCUD carriers to rescuing Allied scientists from the deadly clutches of the HEX organisation, and although each mission requires a pilot with his wits about him, the whole feel of the game is that of a frantic arcade shooter as opposed to a true simulation. Three differing viewing angles are provided for your in-flight entertainment, but to be honest, that's about as technical as it gets. You don't need thousands of knobs and dials blinking at you every two seconds in Strikepoint, so Elite hasn't supplied any.

Something else Elite hasn't bothered with is an easy joystick configuration. Where as it's fairly simple enough to get your chopper off the ground, it becomes increasingly frustrating when you want to swoop down on your prey below or set your craft down on a HeliPad, mainly due to the ►

Chopper Squad...

You have nine selectable craft to choose from during play, with the only main differences being the colours, their armour and the speed attributes. Choose wisely



You and a mate can try and defeat the HEX Organisation in the co-op two player mode



StrikePoint

► incomprehensible controls. You can, however, fiddle around with it a couple of times if you like – hell, you can even twist the camera angles around to your liking too – it's all down to personal preference at the end of the day. But I struggled a bit.

On the graphical front, StrikePoint isn't one of those titles where you're constantly being blinded by ultra-high resolution polygon-based enemies, far from it. The overall look of the game is that of basic textured-mapped landscapes that look as if they've not had a great deal of development time spent on

them and enemy aircraft follow suit. Because of this point, the game feels slightly rushed and leaves passing onlookers frowning their brows in confusion at the somewhat poor on-screen air display.

Sure enough though, gorgeous graphics don't maketh the game and StrikePoint makes up for its shoddy clothing with some hectic gameplay and virtually impossible missions. Fail to complete any level within the allotted time limit and your craft will sizzle, pop and explode into flames and plummet to the ground in seconds, leaving the in-game voice booming 'Game Over' down your ear. Another way to make sure you and the helicopter end up on the floor in a smouldering pile is to allow yourself to be

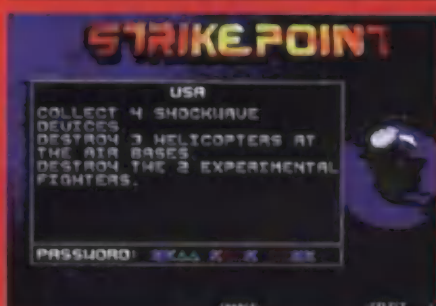
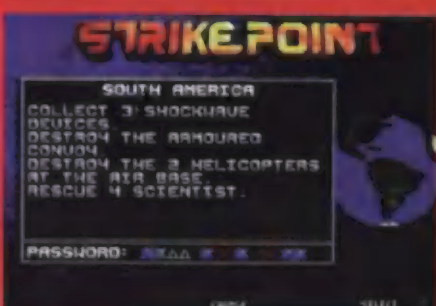
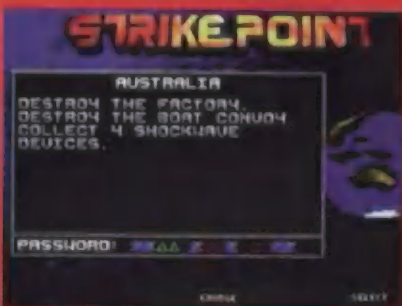
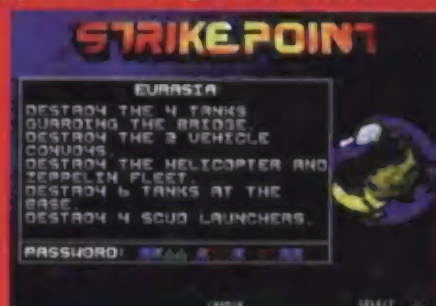
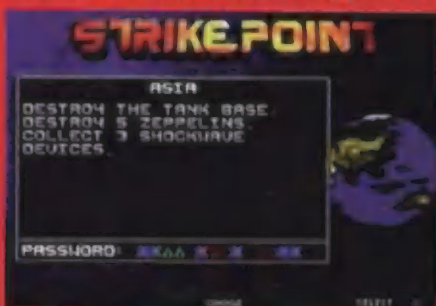
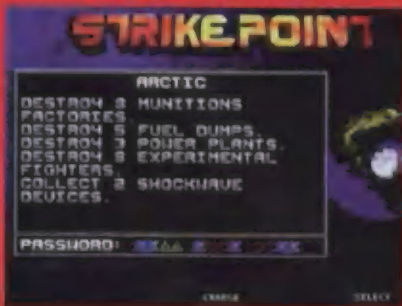


You'll get a brief FMV sequence at the start of each mission, showing you taking off from the heli-pad. Very interesting you'll no doubt agree

Don't play with the camera option if you're going to leave yourself in an impossible playing angle. Like this one

Missions Impossible?

You have 10 missions to complete, but due to an illiterate artist, you can only look at six right now. Cheers



damaged. Failing to avoid hot enemy flying lead or simply keep on crashing into things will immediately knock valuable points from your armour and the only way you can top it back up again is to get your head together and go and hunt out an Allied Heli-Pad.

Once you plonk the craft down safely, not only can armour be replenished, but all the access cargo you're carrying can be deposited too.

It's the little arcadey features such as this that make StrikePoint accessible and addictive to most people who play it, although – as mentioned earlier – certain games players may feel slightly more at ease with something that offers them a combination of both arcade shoot'em-up and flight simulator, and

let's face it, there isn't exactly a massive shortage of those at the moment, is there? You will get your money's worth from StrikePoint though, what with its tough missions, two player battle mode and somewhat advanced gameplay. Plus it's bound to take you an eternity to complete all the missile pumping missions on offer.

The thing that's bugging me though, is the fact that because of its slightly tough difficulty setting I feel that certain people are going to get wildly over frustrated with this pretty sharpish and may feel the need to nip down the second hand shop with it tucked under their arm within weeks. But maybe that's just me being a tad too cynical.

It's always handy if you have a quick look around the playing area before diving in, guns blazing



Take your time when approaching enemy bases. You never know when some nutter will come around the corner and blast you from the skies



Save all your best ammo for when an opponent is in your sights. Wasting missiles isn't a smart way to play or win. Think on sunshine...

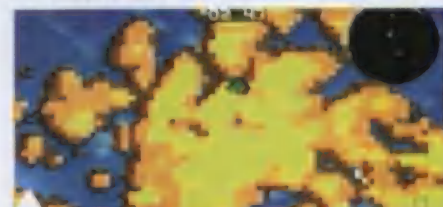


As your sad loser boy opponent hits the ground, you suddenly burst into flames. Arse

In the groovy two player co-operative mode, it makes perfect games playing sense to plan tactics with your partner before commencing attack



Extreme close-up! Full in-yer-face cockpit action as you plough into the camera for a daft laugh



Fail to dodge incoming missiles and this happens. It's you exploding, in case you were wondering

PRO SCORE

GAME StrikePoint
CONTACT 01922 55852

GENRE Helicopter Shoot'em-up SOFTWARE HOUSE Elite
RELEASE DATE November PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 6
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 7

A little tricky to control here and there, but overall StrikePoint delivers a fairly nifty little air combat fix for those of you who've grown bored of Gunship 2000, FireStorm, Agile Warrior and the like, and fancy something that offers some good old fashioned trigger-pounding action instead of all the usual flight simulation guff. It won't please everybody who plays it, but will catch the eye of particular flying-obsessed gamers. This is a true example of an old 'Try Before You Buy' title methinks

7
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE Looks dated and doesn't play all that well for my money. Personally I'll be looking elsewhere

ANDY Even quicker than Raging Skies and this is a helicopter! It won't however, set the world on fire

ALEX As arcadey as they come, StrikePoint comes as a welcome alternative to the likes of Gunship 2000

Victory Boxing '97

The Producer's Cut

JVC has opted for a true sport simulation rather than a beat'em-up – a pure boxing game in which brain is (nearly) as important as brawn



A Frank Bruno of a release on the Saturn, Victory Boxing punched hard but was a bit too slow to succeed at the highest level. Blame for this could be apportioned to the Saturn's lesser speed and graphical capabilities compared to those of the PlayStation. JVC, therefore, has no choice but to deliver with the PlayStation version of a fighting game that promised so much.

The most successful boxers in history have often tended to come from similar socio-economic backgrounds. The cliché of troubled childhoods, dragged up if brought up at all, living in slums, ghettos or dodgy children's homes and having to survive on their wits and the quickness of their fists rings true again and again.

JVC has avoided bringing the 'street' element of boxing into Victory Boxing '97 – The Producer's Cut (VB97), but instead placed emphasis on the rigorous training regimes that all decent boxers have to suffer if they're to be a contender.

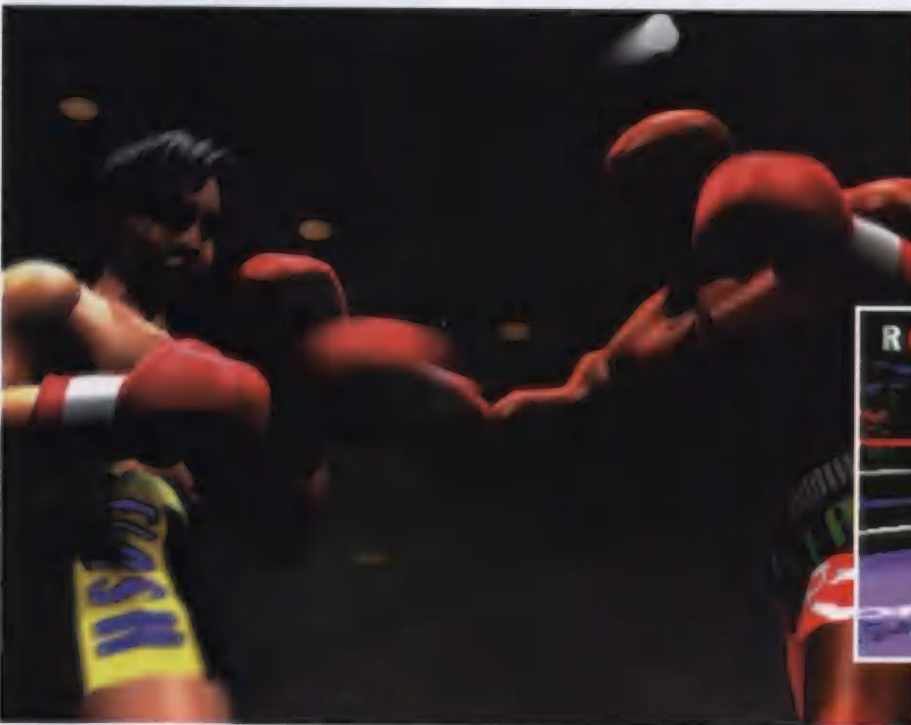
A pick-up-and-play game this isn't. Going straight into a single-player exhibition game can only lead to one result – defeat. Similarly, going straight into a two-player game is equally pointless. Obviously, you stand a better chance of winning, but you won't

really know how you managed it, as the inevitable toe-to-toe slugfest will end in both players as bemused as each other, regardless of which one of you finished the bout kissing the canvas.

Hopefully, you'll have read the preceding paragraph or else this won't make a lot of sense. I've now played VB97 several times and, lo and behold, I've just hammered my CPU opponent in the third round with my first connecting punch – the sequence of events you can see captured in still screenshot form over the page.

What becomes apparent after trial and error is that your best bet for success is to create a heavy-weight boxer. But not any ordinary heavyweight. I found that a boxer in the Mike Tyson mould, that is at the heavy end of the heavyweight scale but not very tall, poses the greatest threat to the motley line-up of CPU opponents.

In between bouts, an animated cigar-puffing promoter gives you some 'valuable' advice. Best ignored – the guy's a cross between Dr Who and Don King. The word 'gym' does crop up rather often, and it's at this point, when Who/King disappears from view, that you get the chance to increase your speed, power and stamina. These three attributes



With one minute and 32 seconds of the first round remaining, heavyweight Jonny Hardsmall floors his opponent



Deck your opponent three times in the same round, and you win by a technical knockout (TKO)

increase in direct proportion to the amount of skipping, punch bag work and sand bag work you put in. An animated shot of your boxer training is depicted in a small box at the top left of the screen as you alter the power bars to suit. The more skipping you put in, the less sand bag and punch bag work you're allowed to do, thus reducing your chances of ever becoming a good all-round fighter.

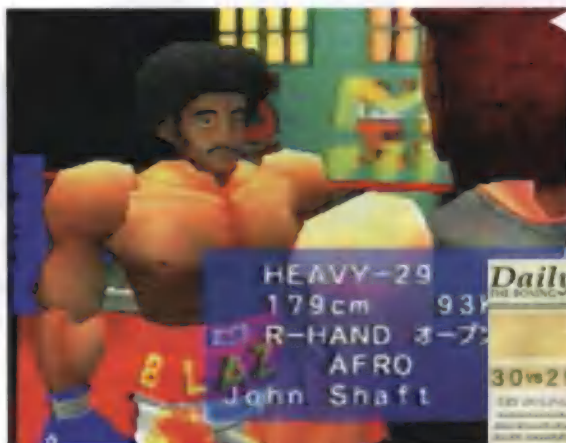
The best way to achieve ultimate performance and overall victory is gruelling, but rewarding – especially if you've invested in a memory card. Fight the boxer who's a single place above you in the ranking table, go into the gym in between victories and see your attributes gradually build up until you're a formidable polygon pugilist.

You can save your boxer's stats at any point. In fact, you can be in control of the careers of up to eight boxers at any one time – all different weights, skin tones, hairstyles, heights, male or female, right handed or southpaw.

As well as training and 'advice' in between bouts, there's the odd sparring match. These are useful for perfecting defensive boxing techniques and, in the fullness of time, learning new punches which are added to your armoury the more bouts you win. ▶



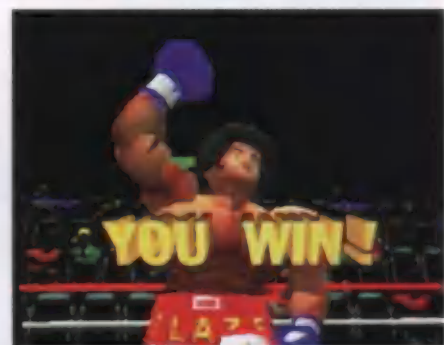
Snake, a drunken ex-army fitness instructor, gives you some advice then leathers you in a sparring bout



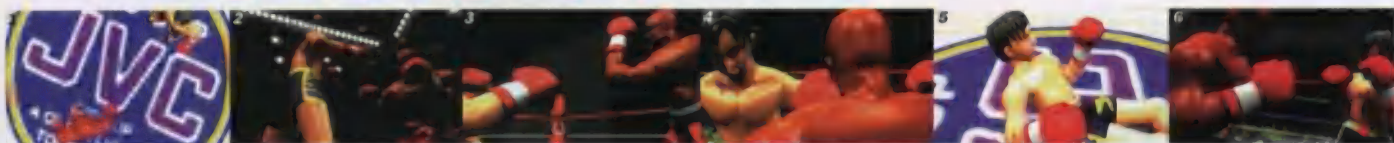
The Daily Placebo records every fight. The official British release of VB97 won't have a mixture of Japanese and British text

The six judges have unanimously awarded me 10 out of 10, whereas my opponent's top score is a meagre seven

ROUND 1 OF 4			
10 / 10	SCORE	7 / 7	
10 / 10	FINISH VIDEO	7 / 7	
10 / 10		6 / 6	
JONNY HARD SMALL		ミ・ゲートウェイ	
ROUND STATUS	50%	ROUND STATUS	50%
PUNCH LANDED	23	PUNCH LANDED	23
PUNCH THROWN	33	PUNCH THROWN	46
KNOCKDOWN	0	KNOCKDOWN	0
TOTAL STATUS 50%		TOTAL STATUS 50%	
PUNCH LANDED 23		PUNCH LANDED 23	
PUNCH THROWN 33		PUNCH THROWN 46	

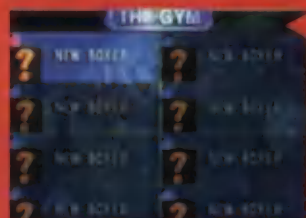


Introducing the polygon pugilists



1. The intro sequence kicks off with a swirling overhead view 2-5. The camera angle swings all over, at the same pace as a jungle music promo video 6. Although both fighters are floored during the action, the fight goes on...

Building a boxer



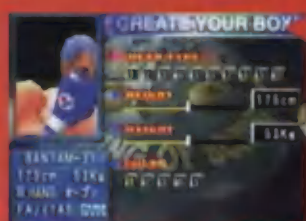
First, go to the blank screen where there are eight separate slots for the creation of new boxers



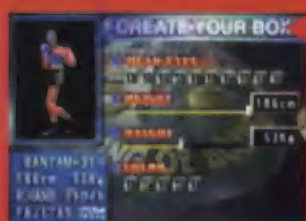
Then choose a man or a woman (apparently, there isn't a recognised hermaphrodite boxing organisation) and left or right handed



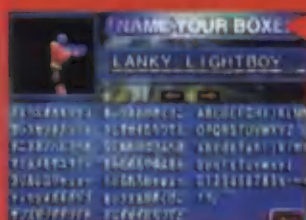
The next step is to specify a weight division in which to compete. This time, I've opted for a bantam weight



You can now set your boxer's exact height and weight specifications, as well as his face and colour of gloves, shorts and boots



This is what happens when you choose a ridiculously tall and light fighter – his elongated body almost fills the animated box at the top left



Unlike the Frankenstein legend, where the monster was never given a name, you may christen your creation anything you like (under 17 characters)



Initially, your boxing skills are poor. It's at this stage, which recurs throughout, that you can train your fighter up into a lean, mean fighting machine

Hardsmall, diminutive in stature, but packing a powerful punch, eyeballs his nervous opponent



Jonny Hardsmall, after only three victorious fights, has already increased his speed, power and stamina levels

Victory Boxing 97

► In the early stages of your VB97 career, your sparring partners will hammer you, but as you win more 'real' bouts you'll ultimately be able to take on any one.

Every time you are successful in a bout, be it a straight knockout, a technical knockout (TKO) achieved by knocking down your opponent three times, or a tough points victory, the Daily Placebo records your win on its front cover. This extra touch isn't entirely necessary, but as it comes complete with your boxer's chosen name and a photo of him and the hapless adversary in the ring, it enhances your sense of achievement.

Before you reach the front cover, however, there's a fight to be won, and after you've played the likes of Tekken and Streetfighter Alpha, you'll be surprised at how sluggish your boxer's controls initially feel. Once you're in the ring, VB97 is very much a matter of technique and timing, rather than just furious flailing fists. For a start, you can only land a blow when you're not moving. Although you can side-step, advance and retreat, you can only re-position your feet in between punches.

The full range of jabs, uppercuts, straights and crosses, head shots and body blows are in there – but only after you've climbed the ranking ladder. To begin with, your attack armoury consists of left and right crosses and straights to the head and body. You're also able to block high and low – and it's all



The knock-out – a blow-by-blow account



1. Early doors, and he's rattled me
2. I come back strong, and gauge my reach
3. A right cross sends him reeling
4. Floorwards is the only way he's going
5. I back away, the adrenalin pumping hard
6. The statistics say it all

in glorious 4D. That's the bit that really sells VB97.

Unlike, say, Tekken and Toshinden, when sometimes the camera angle isn't quite right, VB97's in-game camera angle is always spot on. Wherever you go in the ring, the camera's right there giving you the perfect view of the proceedings. The fourth dimension, real time, adds tension and helps create a sense of urgency, although it has to be said that even the quickest boxer in this game doesn't come near the speed of a real life counterpart such as Prince Naseem.

Having said that, whether you're taking a beating or giving out a savage pummeling, there's not a great deal of time to think, and that's where the full round instant replay option comes into its own. To analyse your performance and learn something from it, there's nothing better than this. You're placed in full control of the camera, the speed, the rewind and the pause button. Any single moment can be

frozen from any angle you like, as close in or as far away as common sense dictates.

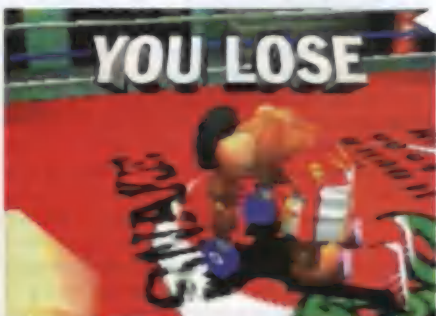
Although you'll never see a referee in the ring, all the rules adhere to the correct Queensbury code, even down to disqualification if you don't back away far enough from your prostrate opponent after you've floored him. There's a good reason for the referee not being there – there's absolutely no point to him being present. It wouldn't add anything to the game-play and JVC has taken the sensible option in not complicating matters for the sake of spurious authenticity.

The motion capture technology used to create the pugilists puts VB97 way ahead of any console boxing game. VB97's development team has taken into account the way boxers of various build move differently to each other and how experienced champ boxers bob and weave around compared to the laboured actions of novices. Gouraud shading, which

the Saturn isn't capable of (an earlier version was released on the Saturn, to great acclaim), is used to give the boxers a more lifelike appearance. Details such as rib cage formation, shoulder muscles and pectorals make each boxer look solid – there's less glitching caused by character movement than the acclaimed '3D' Toshinden for example.

Staying on the graphical side of things, there are several different rings to fight in – big, floodlit arenas (where the fighters cast shadows on the canvas), outdoor rings set in the middle of forests, and street rings and gym rings, where sparring takes place. Obviously, you don't tend to notice the scenery when you're concentrating on a fight, but in terms of graphics, nothing seems to have been skimmed on.

As fellow writer Steve McNally commented, 'It makes a change for a game to take a while to get into'. I couldn't have put it better myself.



Every boxer loses at least once in his lifetime (apart from, perhaps, Prince Naseem). This is where you take stock, learn from your mistakes, and come back a stronger and better fighter

As Queensbury rules dictate, you must back away from your opponent. If you don't you risk losing points or, worse, face instant disqualification



Jonny Hardemall once more floors his hapless foe – this time seen from the ring-side seat perspective

PRO SCORE

GAME Victory Boxing '97
CONTACT 0171-240 3121

GENRE Sport sim
RELEASE DATE November

SOFTWARE HOUSE JVC
PRICE £44.99

- GRAPHICS 9
- SOUND 8
- GAMEPLAY 8
- LASTABILITY 8

In one-player mode, VB97 is fascinating – you control the entire career of a customised boxer. The real-life moves of boxing are mirrored accurately (if a little slowly). What lets VB97 down, however, is that the two-player option isn't up to much. It only comes into its own when you've both spent a while improving your boxers' technique, speed, power and stamina. For this reason – and its sluggishness – it'll never compete with the likes of Tekken, although as a boxing sim it's difficult to fault.

8 1/2
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE I'd have been tempted to give this a 9 simply because it's got more depth than most beat-'em-ups

ANDY Not simply a beat-'em up due to the fact you have to use a bit of brain power. A rarity indeed

JAY VB97 is a good, solid boxing simulation that needs to be truly mastered in order to reap all of its benefits

Crash Bandicoot

Platform games have been around for well over a decade now but you've never, never seen anything like this. Prepare to have your views of a genre completely rewritten. Sony's Crash Bandicoot has arrived



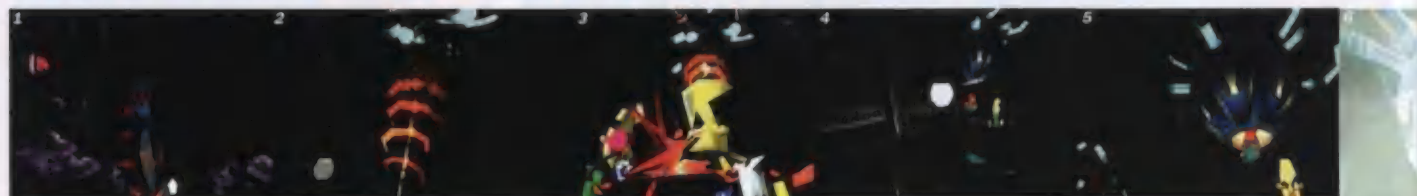
Watch yourself around dynamite, but just once blow yourself up to see the comedy animation

When we were working on the PlayStation Pro Recommends section of the magazine the other day (our essential guide to the best games in every style, which can be found towards the back of the magazine) one thing surprised me more than any other. I simply hadn't realised how few decent platform games had come out so far on the PlayStation. And being a big fan of this type of game you'd have thought I would have noticed.

Let's face it, there's only been one so far, Rayman, and that hardly makes the PlayStation the platform fan's dream machine now does it. And with Mario 64 looming large on the horizon this was a gap in the market that needed to be filled quickly by somebody, and seeing as how no other software houses seemed to be particularly keen in offering their services it had to be Sony themselves who stepped into the breach. And with the aid of hot shot developers Naughty Dog Software they've taken a swipe at Nintendo's machine which could well be broad enough to send it over the edge. Crash Bandicoot could well become the straw that broke Nintendo's back in the UK, but only time will tell.

All we can say for definite is that, by quite some way, this is undoubtedly the best platform style game ever to have been officially released in this country on any format. I say 'platform style'

What's all this fancy intro film guff about then eh?



1. Dr Cortex's spooky castle... 2. ...where inside, a laser pulsates. 3. 'Ha ha, we have you now Bandicoot etc' 4. Later...
8. He leaps through the nearest window... 9. ...unfortunately he picks the window directly above the dramatic drop to the ocean.



Hog Wild is the single most memorable level from the first island. Fast and frantic this is just about as exciting as games get



Precise jumping plays a large part. It may look easy but these platforms are always on the move

because to describe CB simply as that does it a disservice. For the most part it's a fair assessment but also thrown in for good measure are several stages that only fit into that bracket loosely, but I'll come onto those later.

Crash has it all I'm afraid which really does make my life difficult because there are no faults that I can get my teeth into and have a good moan about. Therefore I'll apologise in advance for all the glowing praise which I'm forced to heap onto this game.

I'll take it aspect by aspect I think, starting with the initial attraction, the graphics, which are astounding. At first I thought I was going to be able to whinge about lack of graphical variety because the first of the three islands which make up the game is all set in a forest, but this gripe was taken away from me as I made my way via waterfalls, snow capped mountains and on into the inside of buildings.

This is not just a game of stunning graphics but also one of stunning graphical variety. It's the kind in which totally unnecessary bits of detail have been painstakingly put in and you wonder why they bothered, but do so appreciatively (a good example being in the forest sections where totally irrelevant insects buzz around the screen, doing nothing more

The action starts to heat up, as does Crash's fur in this instance. He's a hardy soul though so you shouldn't worry too much. You'll be killing him at least a thousand times before you're through



The spin attack is Crash's most potent weapon. This destroys just about anything in his path



Crates contain numerous goodies and can be broken open by jumping on them or spinning



You'll need to time your jumps to perfection through these electrifying pylons

than setting the scene). The same can be said for the music and sound effects. It's all very cartoony but more in a Tom & Jerry sort of a way rather than the wise cracking, Turtles style character so unsuccessfully used in Gex. Crash never gets on your nerves because for the most part he keeps pretty quiet with most of the characterisation coming through facial expressions (the odd knowing look or cheesy grin) rather than verbal diarrhoea, and it's works a treat.

The music is on the whole unintrusive and, for the most part, you don't even really notice it which, it has to be said, is a shame because when your ears do prick up you realise just how good it is.

A good illustration of both my previous points can be found quite early on. The stage is called Hog Wild and as it loads you really haven't got a clue what you're supposed to do. Crash turns around, gives you the cheesiest smile you've ever seen before turning and leaping onto the back of the Hog and sending you through a madcap series of jumps over gaping chasms and last minute veering manoeuvres round big wooden posts and indestructible enemies. All this accompanied by some red-neck style banjo tune banging away in the background. Unnecessary maybe because most of the time you'll be concentrating far too hard even to ▶



5. ...Crash is being tampered with! 6. The machine rejects Crash and explodes! 7. Our hero leaps it with Dr Cortex close behind. 10. Tawna gasps! Is Crash dead? Is it all over before it's begun? 11. No. Crash awakes on a nearby beach and his mission begins!

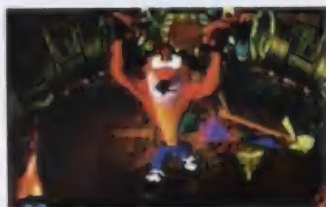
Crash Bandicoot

These are the people in your neighbourhood...



CRASH BANDICOOT

You play as Crash the hero of the hour as he scampers across islands hopping over turtles, bouncing off vultures, jumping on platforms, spinning into boxes, whilst trying to save his bird and stop the token maniac taking over the world. Phew!



KOALA KONG

This bulky bear is found deep within a lava mine shaft. Whatever that is. Anyway, he launches rocks at you as you're attempting to avoid the TNT littered around, leaving you the additional challenge of punting the rocks back at him at specific moments



BONUS UNGABUNGA BLOKE

Smash the relevant boxes and you'll discover the Ungabunga bloke. Collect one and you've got yourself a half-life bonus, collect two and you've got a pair of 'em and three makes you completely invincible for a short period. Top bloke



PAPU PAPU

You'll meet this porky pigmy in the earlier levels where he'll try with all his blubbery might to smash you with his oversized totem pole. Hop on the back of his chubby head as he spins with his pole lowered and he's soon a fat memory



RIPPER ROO

Completely bonkers. This straight-jacket bound kangaroo mental case bounces around the floating squares screen in a fairly basic pattern, allowing you to detonate the floating TNT as it passes and blow his wacky ass goodbye. A tricky task



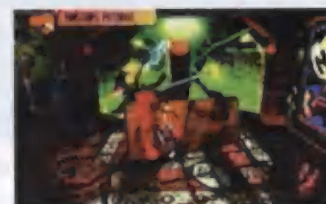
TAWNA

If you do manage to survive the incredibly tricky bonus rounds, you'll meet Crash's foxy lady, Tawna. And if you're extra nice to her she'll give you a handful of extra lives as well as allowing you to save your progress - thank God!



PINSTRIP POTOROO

After you've spun his fat gangster mates out of the way on the way to PinStripe's lair, all you need to do now is avoid his machinegun fire and spin at him when he's struggling to get his shooter loaded. Six well-timed hits and he's outta there



DR NITRUS BRIO

Brio will toss exploding test tubes as you progress through the last island as well as turning into a huge monster. Psychos are normally weird, but this one's completely hatstand



DR NEO CORTEX

Cortex is the very last boss and therefore he's pretty fierce. Make sure you've got a large wad of extra lives when you tackle him and his big balloon or it's game over for you, my dear little innocent bandicoot



Old Crash must be desperate to go leaping around on bridges like this



A quick flash of that cheesy grin and it's off on a rollercoaster ride through Hog Wild



Rushing along the river you'll come across snapping plants, floating leaves and death at every turn

care but it all adds up to the complete package which, like I say, is difficult to criticise. The gameplay is the only other really important part, so does it disappoint? What do you think? For the majority of the time it's like a thousand other platformers you've played but done far, far better. The perspective varies wildly on different stages as the action scrolls both horizontally and in and out the screen, at times leaving your head spinning with the pace of it all.

The level design is just about perfect as well. Precision timing and perception of distance are essential assets later on as the jumps become more and more difficult but the learning curve is set so well that you'll just about have mastered your leaping technique by the time the action starts to heat up. Don't be fooled into thinking you'll waltz through it though, it's easily as tough as Rayman. The difference is you'll finish it much quicker than Ubi Soft's now outclassed effort. I'm not really contradicting myself there though however much it may seem like I am.

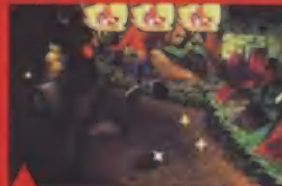
You see, the reason you'll complete CB more quickly is because once it grips you it really doesn't let you go. Ever. At least, not until you've finished it, and then there's still the urge to relive the experience and maybe even find a few secret places. You never seem to tire of redoing the same section over and over again because although it can be immense-

Rolling Stone is another office favourite level, simply because it's so bloody difficult. Most frustrating



You finally get to meet Doctor N. Brio on this level, but only briefly - you're not at the end yet, there's still quite some way to go yet!

Didn't he do well?



TAWNA'S BOX
Collect three of the Tawna icons on one level and you'll be whisked off to a bonus stage. These are pretty rare though so make sure you don't die and waste them before you've found all three



BOUNCY BOUNSES
The bonus levels themselves are usually quite short and relatively simple but it's oh so easy to slip up and die, which is most frustrating because it means you've missed out on a save point



THANK GOD FOR THAT!
Get to the end and there are usually a couple of extra lives knocking about plus the all important opportunity to save to either memory card or get a password. And believe me, you'll need it!

ly frustrating you know that you're going to be rewarded with something even better on the next level.

This is where the variety I mentioned earlier comes into play. I can't remember a single instance throughout the whole of Crash's 40-odd levels where two similar style levels followed each other. Most times you'll do an into-the-screen level followed by a end-of-level boss or an out-of-the-

screen Indiana Jones-esque Boulder Dash, or even the Hog Wild level which again I mentioned earlier. You get the picture anyway. The game never gets boring because, although it's essentially a platformer at heart you're never called on to do the same thing for too long.

It's not that the different style levels are particularly original - the Boulder Dash is similar to the Stampede section in The Lion King, and Hog Wild ▶



Looking justifiably worried Crash realises that things are getting tough now on the later stages. Better watch your step



There's a small puzzle element in the game as well but for the most part it's all out platform action of the highest calibre



Unless you want that big spikey thing on your head you'd better work out the timing of its thrusts



If you don't act fast you could end up with this toxic waste barrel in your face!

Crash Bandicoot

Levels we know and love

This game is a pure interactive treat right the way through, but certain levels manage to get your heart pumping and your hands slightly sweatier than others, and it's these that stick in the mind as excellent pieces of programming. We've chosen four of our favourite bits so you can have a better look at them. And they are...



BOULDER DASH

Indiana Jones-style rock avoiding is the aim of this level, where Crash runs towards the screen jumping into the unknown where disappearing platforms, annoying fences and irritating telegraph poles all try their best to hinder his progress. You'll sweat buckets and rejoice like crazy as Crash makes the final leap into the level warp hole.



ROLLING STONES

An aptly named level featuring massive circular wheels rolling about the place, all hellbent on crushing you to death. The holes in the ground and various other obstacles cause you endless nightmares, and having to land on the ledges of oncoming wheels all add to the frantic gameplay. Top stuff.



HOG WILD

Crash gives the camera a cheeky grin, an even cheekier raise of the eyebrows and he's off. As soon as he hops aboard the runaway hog, the action gets very fast and very hectic as you try to avoid dancing pygmies, spiked poles and rotating hogs on spits while at all times desperately trying to collect the wooden boxes of fun. A classic piece of programming.



TOXIC WASTE

Bit of a weird one this. There's loads of 3D hopping about and plenty of spooky bouncing barrels ahoj which all leads to one of the most frustrating levels. Like most of the game though, time is on your side, so keep a cool head and you'll eventually breeze through this tricky section.

► is reminiscent of the Mine Cart bit in the God awful Cheesey – but it's the fact that they're there to break up the action, and have been done so much better than they were in their original versions that makes the whole package so incredible.

The only tiny little thing I can see that may annoy people is that, if they are easily frustrated, some of the precise jumping required on levels such as Road to Nowhere and High Road may give them palpitations at times, and if one of your mates or a member of your family is short tempered, it's probably best to move any breakable objects away from the PlayStation if you value them (Jay broke one of our office fans playing this!). Even they though will be totally gripped by this game, in fact as I write this now Jay's busy trying desperately to complete the last five levels. It may not be good for your health but then, anything that's this much fun never is.

Crash Bandicoot teases you with the promise of greater enjoyment with each new level but for the most part places it just tantalisingly out of reach at first and insists that you work hard for any rewards. You can save the game (via passwords or memory cards) but even this is quite difficult.

To get the chance to save you must collect three icons (found scattered around levels, usually the trickier ones) and then complete a bonus round, at the end of which will be a save point. Fail to get the three icons or get to the end of the bonus round though and the chance is gone and you don't get another. This means that when all your lives are gone you can continue but only from the point where you last saved the game. Bloody annoying, but also bloody clever.

Although the effort of getting to and completing a bonus round so you can save is so great, you know



Ripper Roo frustrated us for quite some time, but the boss sections are just as well done as the rest of the game.

Icon go for miles and miles...



JUICY APPLES

Apples are plentiful in supply throughout all the levels. If you manage to collect 100 of them before losing all your lives, you'll get an extra life! Wahey!



PROTECTION

Collect the Witch Doctor's mask and you'll be protected from the first hit you sustain. Collect two masks without taking a hit and you'll be protected from two and so on.



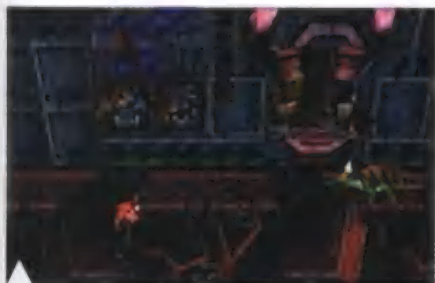
EXTRA LIFE

Collect a Crash Bandicoot icon and you'll get an extra life. There are plenty of these around early on but don't be fooled, you'll need 'em all, and a few more besides!



BONUS ROUND

These objects are perhaps the most valuable – and hard to come by. Collect three and you go into the bonus round – reach the end and you can save the game!



Bats swarm down from above so you need to take cover. A mask'd be handy too at this point

that the reward is going to be more than worth the countless number of times you have to replay the same level. This is a new experience for me because my attention span is legendarily short, and usually, after playing the same bit no more than twice I've lost interest. Maybe that's why Crash Bandicoot seems so revolutionary. To me at least.

There's just so much worth shouting about in this game that I've barely even scratched the surface of what I wanted to say in this review. It's the best platform challenge I've ever played by a mile, is virtually faultless as a one player game and to top it all off it's aesthetically stunning in just about every way you can imagine.

When you strip away the detail though and get right down to just the facts it's essentially taken me the best part of six pages to say what I could have said just as effectively in two words - buy it! - the statement's just as valid as all I've made previously, but then I wouldn't exactly be earning my salary if that was all I'd done now would I?



The facial characterisation is second to none. Thankfully Naughty Dog resisted the temptation to make him the wisecracking type



Another of the bosses, Koala Kong, gives you a bit of a crack



Plastrope lets loose with his shooter in one of the later boss levels



Papa Pupa, tribe leader and all round nasty piece work

Jay's Second Opinion

Because Crash is such a classy piece of software, we thought it'd be wise if we gave another opinion, as opposed to just that of the main reviewer. And here's what I've got to say: Crash is an absolute corker! Not since Mario made his debut have I been so glued to the screen, finding myself desperately battling my way through the many levels of frolics and fun, frantically tugging on God's shirt sleeves begging for a save point so I can continue further. The whole multi-coloured caboodle is one massive melting pot of humour, eye pleasing graphics, addictive gameplay, absorbing puzzles, 3D mayhem, chance, trial and error and good old fashioned entertainment.

Each varying boss level requires thought, skill and plenty of patience, whereas the main bulk of levels swing wildly from one viewpoint to another throwing overhead, first-person, side-on and other crazy angles into your face stunning you into submission purely by how amazing it all is. You simply have to spend loads of time on Crash if you want to get anywhere, sassing out when platforms will vanish and when or when not to make that leap - it's all so enthralling that I'm lost for words. Which isn't a good thing in my line of work, I can tell you.

Apart from it being bloody difficult (which isn't necessarily a bad thing) there's nothing I can say to fault this title. It's been highly polished and it shows, and to be truthful I can't really see Rayman 2 or Cheesy Returns worrying developers Naughty Dog much. If you're a fan of the genre, the fact is that you're not going to get anything remotely near as good as Crash on your machine for a long time to come, so buy it. Forget Mario 64, that fat Italian ain't wiggling his butt over here for a good few months yet. Crash is here right now and if his debut PlayStation outing is anything to go by, he's gonna be around for some time to come. A 10-out-of-10 title in my book, despite Steve giving it a 9.

True love's a painful thing. Especially if you're Crash Bandicoot and your better half is in trouble

You need to blow up Ripper Roo by timing when you set off the countdown on the TNT crates. Tricky



PRO SCORE

GAME Crash Bandicoot
CONTACT 0171 447 1600

GENRE Platform
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony Computer Entertainment
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 9

How can I possibly sum up all Crash Bandicoot's plus points in 100 words? I can't - simple as that. You'll have to read the review for specifics and you'll just have to forgive me for being shallow and gushing here. Buy this. You must. It's an order. Well, maybe not an order but if you like good value for money games, which break new ground then your conscience should order you to get it any way so it shouldn't be left to me. Crash Bandicoot deserves to be a roaring success. Make sure it is. Or else.

9 1/2
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

ALEX The best single-player PlayStation game. It's been ages in development and, more importantly, in the play-testing stage. Every minute spent has been worth it. 'Excellent' isn't a strong enough superlative

ANDY In terms of all round playability and excellence Crash Bandicoot is a rare treat. However good it is though it still hasn't grabbed my attention for too long. Probably because I'm not much of a platform fan

Black Dawn

Agile Warrior, Black Dawn's prequel, was critically acclaimed but never really set the games world alight. But will Black Dawn go the same way?



Rescuing hostages from 'hot zones' is all in a day's work for a pilot in Black Dawn



You'll need to be on your guard at all times with weapons like this around



Destruction on a massive scale is most definitely the order of the day. Pacifists need not apply

This isn't Virgin's first dabble at a flight sim style game on the PlayStation. Early buyers may well remember Agile Warrior but you'd be forgiven for forgetting because, despite working on a PlayStation magazine at the time, I can't remember the first thing about it, other than Alex going on about how good it was.

I never played it myself so can't comment on whether he was right or not, but either way it should have made more of a splash than it did because it scored well pretty much across the board, only never to be heard of again.

Hopefully Black Dawn will fare much better because, and I'm speaking from personal experience of it here, it really does deserve to. Okay so it's a helicopter style flight sim cum shoot'em-up, and the idea's pretty much been done to death. I'd struggle, however, to think of a finer example of how this type of thing should be done at the moment (I'm reserving judgement on the imminent Soviet Strike though, which looks as though it could be even better).

The plot's fairly unnecessary to the proceedings

as a whole but I'll give you a brief idea what's going on just to set the scene.

You fly a helicopter for the American government. You're one of their crack pilots and whenever trouble's brewing you can just about guarantee that you'll end up in the middle of it at one stage or another.

You can (and will) be called upon to deal with anything from fighting terrorism in your own backyard, to crushing dictatorial style leaders who threaten your country's interests abroad. Very much like the real thing I should imagine.

The developer has cleverly used this somewhat open-ended setting for the game to ferry you around the globe fighting wrong doing in all manner of different settings.

This gives Black Dawn a feeling of freshness throughout, even though essentially what you're doing each time you progress is the same as you were on the last level, only a bit harder.

This is why Black Dawn succeeds where, for me,

games like Warhawk and Thunderhawk, failed. There was no incentive to progress when each successive section was very similar, but Black Dawn clever mission structure (which I'll come to in a second) and variety of graphical styles and settings urge you on to keep trying to find out what crisis will crop up next.

The way the missions develop is not exactly original (for example, it's very much the same as the system used a good few years back in EA's Desert Strike) but it's the best way of doing things in my opinion, and creates a feeling that a crisis is actually happening with its constantly changing objectives.

It's quite simple really. When you take off initially you'll be given a goal, be it to take out some radar warning systems, or rescue a hostage, but when you achieve that objective what generally happens is your actions provoke a counter reaction from whoever you're fighting against, and a lot of the time this poses a new threat which must also be dealt with. This is another example of how a bit



Keep a close eye on your radar display at all times

You're locked on to the primary target. Prepare to fire



A very nice rendered intro sequence precedes the main game action

of thought in the design stage can make the difference between a good game a great one.

Let's take MicroProse's Gunship as a case in point. It's undoubtedly a fine product, and is probably still the best 'serious' helicopter combat simulation on any format, but the biggest gripe I had with it was that there was no sense of progression through the missions, no overall goal to work towards, even in campaign mode.

This is because each mission stands alone. You finish one, you go back to the menus and start another. Fine if you want to recreate accurately the lifestyle of a real army helicopter pilot, but where's the fun in that?

Black Dawn has a different, and in my opinion, much better way of getting you to feel involved, although it does give the game a more arcadey feel which will undoubtedly put some people off.

The 3D engine used is also quite similar to one many people will have seen elsewhere. To me it looks like a souped up version of the one Core Design used so successfully in games like Thunderhawk and Shellshock. Objects in



Night missions prove to be very taxing

If you like explosions this is the game for you

Battling planes as well as helicopters are all part of any mission



Don't pat yourself on the back just yet though. There's still a long way to go



Varying types of goal all add to the variety Black Dawn offers

There are a number of different graphical styles through the game

In this instance your primary targets are ground based, requiring a quick change of weaponry





Weapons are in short supply so you need a keen eye rather than an itchy trigger finger



Handily the HUD gives plenty of warning should you target a friendly object



The map in the bottom left corner of the screen shows where you should be heading

Black Dawn

► the distance appear shrouded in a white mist and as you draw close new layers of detail are constantly being added.

If you sit back and look at this it may not seem all that impressive, and indeed a few people watching over my shoulder even passed comment on it, but as anyone who's played either of Core's games (and even to a lesser extent Blam! Machinehead) will know, when you're immersed in the game you barely even notice.

The action is fast and, at times, frantic, and most of the time the last thing on your mind is what method the programmers have used to put the images up before your eyes, simply because you're too busy landing to pick up downed friendly pilots, or avoiding yet another incoming missile.

One of the best things for me lies in the fact that considerable restraint has been exercised over the temptation to turn Black Dawn into an all out arcade blasting frenzy of a game.

It has its moments along those lines but you can also employ the sneaky combat tactics used in real life if you wish (such as attacking from behind a target, hiding and so on), and even nip out of the immediate combat zone for a couple of minutes if

need be to get a breather and collect your thoughts.

The control system at first appears complex, with combinations of all the buttons being used to perform certain tasks – for instance you need to hold down select and press the triangle button to change weapons. But most become second nature surprisingly quickly, probably because you're forced to use them early on, and if you can't you're going to be restarting on a regular basis.

The basic controls are as you would expect with the D pad controlling the direction of the helicopter and direction of fire, and different buttons firing either your cannon or the current missile selection.

Doubtless helicopter aficionados will be up in arms because the aircraft is far from an accurate physical model of the real thing but these concessions have been made for the sake of the games player, and personally I can forgive most of them.

The one that did surprise me was that the speed is not controlled by the angle of the nose of the helicopter – point the nose forward to go faster – but by the x and circle buttons to speed up, slow down, hover and even reverse.

It's not that I was outraged by this lack of respect for realism, it's just that, as a veteran player of Gunship it just didn't feel like the natural way to do things. I soon got it out of my system though and realised that it works just as well as the other method.

Black Dawn has managed seamlessly to blend the action and strategy aspects of helicopter combat games, and in doing so has managed to satisfy both areas of what must be a difficult market to program for.

As they say, you can't please everyone all the time so it would seem that the obvious tactic is to seize the middle ground. Virgin has done that, and done it with some style.

I may have to take this back next month when we review Soviet Strike, but at this moment in time Black Dawn is the best of its kind on the PlayStation, and I'd even go as far as to say it is on a par with the very highly rated Gunship. High praise indeed.



If a cry for help from an innocent party goes up you'll soon be on your way to help them out



Don't worry about shooting down aircraft over populated areas. It's not your problem



The threat warning indicator on the bottom right is the most important display in the aircraft



Rescuing hostages in Central Park is a doddle compared to some of the later missions

PRO SCORE

GAME Black Dawn
CONTACT 0171-368 2255

GENRE Shoot'em-up
RELEASE DATE November

SOFTWARE HOUSE Virgin
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8

The perfect game for me would have to produce bucketloads of adrenaline but still give me time to stop and think about the best way to progress, and while I'm not saying Black Dawn is perfect it does manage to do both those things. Fans of helicopter combat games will be in absolute raptures over this, as will fans of the Strike series who are finding it hard to sit out the wait for the up-and-coming Soviet Strike. It's on its way but this will more than fill the time until it arrives.

8 1/2
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

ALEX Easier missions than the original, but no less of a pleasure to play

ANDY Looks good, plays pretty well and is definitely up there with the Thunderhawks of this world

JAY Looks and plays much better than Agile Warrior and will no doubt thrill the chopper fans accordingly

Untrained Pilot Steals \$45m Jet Fighter

Congress calls for resignation of Defence Chief of Staff

By Frank Schmitz
Staff Reporter

UTAH - Congress have called for the resignation of Sidney Pouch, Defence Department Chief of Staff following what seems to be an unprecedented and embarrassing breach of security at Fort Jefferson Airbase, Utah.

A Pentagon source revealed how a man broke through a perimeter fence at 3.45am Friday and climbed into a waiting F-15D Eagle. The plane had just been re-fuelled for a service

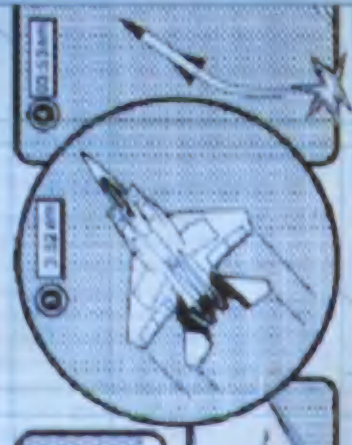
flight and ground staff were unable to stop its take-off. Four USAF pilots responded to the alarm and gave chase. Radio contact was established at 3.52am. This is an extract of the dialogue taken from the transcript.

Pilot 1: "You are in grave danger. Please alter course and return to base."

Fugitive: "No way, man... this is *Raging Skies*."

Pilot 1: "We will be forced to fire. I repeat please comply with previous request."

The pursuing USAF F-16-D Tomcat fighters launched air to air missiles.



THE F-15D EAGLE HAS A LONG REACH CAPABLE OF KNOCKING DOWN A TARGET AT RANGES IN EXCESS OF 200KM USING AIM-7M SPARROW SEMI-ACTIVE RADAR-GUIDED MISSILES.

However the target aircraft out-maneuvred the weapons and disappeared from radar screens.

Five hours later, after landing in a deserted airstrip in Isley, a town close to Toronto, Stephen Bireley, a 32 year old marine student, turned himself over to the authorities. The suspect claimed to have no recollection of the incident when questioned by CIA security officials. However

The Chairman of Play-Station was unavailable for comment.

The F-15-D Eagle has a
F-15D Eagle capable of
1m reach being capable of
knocking down target at
ranges in excess of 200km
using AIM-7M Sparrow
missiles.

Raging Skies

It's flight sim time everybody! This is Sony's attempt at improving a genre which, over the years, has brought some truly stunning air combat to skies the world over



Failure to complete a mission in the time provided will require you continuing from the start of the same mission

Targets could be anywhere. Keep a watchful eye on allied movements also. Destroying friendly vehicles could be disastrous

The quality of flight sims on any format has always been debatable with the very occasional gem turning up. To date there has been a handful of attempts on the PlayStation. This particular effort was originally released in Japan. Sony has renamed it – it was then known as Sidewinder – although the game is in every detail identical.

What's noticeable is that this isn't strictly a sim as generally a keyboard using thousands of keys is required to negotiate every single aspect of your mission. The PlayStation joystick can hardly cope with this however, so Raging Skies is more of an arcade style flight sim.

This doesn't mean it's a doddle though. There's still plenty to think about and every button will be required to get you by. The skies are filled with enemy aircraft and the ground has a liberal spread of anti aircraft weapons.

So all in all you have plenty resting on your worthy shoulders. You will find the going a little tough at first as you get to grips with your aircraft but it will

soon become second nature and you'll be flying sortie after sortie like a true pro.

Not every mission involves you blasting everything that moves and you may be called upon to protect targets on the ground or escort an airliner filled with diplomats safely to its destination. Obviously there will always be enemy targets to blast but one false move and the whole thing could go horribly wrong.

Tactics will also be required as missions can be more successful if you concentrate on destroying either the ground or air targets first. As long as you have some sort of plan then some missions won't be quite so intense but will still provide a decent enough challenge.

Initially you will begin on the simpler missions with a measly reward for your efforts. This is a neat little taster for what's in store later on. This means you will also have to upgrade your aircraft as you will initially be dumped into an aged Phantom. If successful in the missions you will be



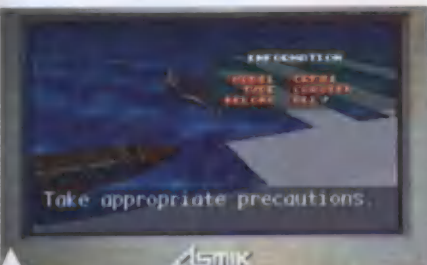
Take that you enemy of all that's good. Your fighting days are well and truly over



The airliner ahead is crammed with diplomats heading for a peace conference so it must be protected at all costs

This is about as close as you can get to an enemy aircraft without actually hitting it in true kamikaze style





The mission ahead is explained to you in great detail on the computer monitor. Good luck

able to upgrade to a more up to date machine. Choice of plane will also be important as some are far more adept at air or ground attack than others.

Before taking flight you must also decide on the weapons you will be carrying and in what quantity. Numerous missiles are available each designed for different types of combat. If your mission involves taking out enemy aircraft only, you should leave the air-to-surface missiles under wraps back at the base.

A few training missions will stand you in good stead for the battles ahead. This is where you should learn exactly how the plane handles and how the weapons are best used. It's also where you will learn that all the missions are timed. There doesn't seem to be a reason for this as you run out of fuel eventually anyway at exactly the same point as the mission time is up.

The only conceivable explanation for this is that it indicates exactly how long you have left before the tanks are empty. Shouldn't half the fun of flight sims be trying to gauge exactly how long your fuel will hold out in battle?

You will soon learn that some missions contain so many enemies that clearing the stage in the allocated time is near as damn it impossible. This is where the challenge picks up considerably. You will have to have your wits about you under these circumstances as the firepower pitted against you is phenomenal.

In terms of graphics Raging Skies looks the business. The skies change from level to level - from clear sunny skies to grey clouds and sunset. There are even some late evening sorties to be tackled where your vision is somewhat impaired. Using radar is paramount here.

The other aircraft look impressive and are distinguishable from each other as some squadrons may contain different types of planes. This is something which has obviously had a great deal of time ►



Your mission is cut short by enemy gunfire. Luckily you do have a few continues so you can get straight back at 'em

Prepare to take flight my friends...

The tried and tested F-16 is arguably the most accomplished fighter in the world

The F-4 Phantom is a bit past it nowadays but has been a big success over the years

The F-18 Hornet has definitely proved itself since its arrival in the US

Wahey it's Top Gun time! The F-14 has been a solid workhorse for the US Navy

The F-22 doesn't exist yet but looks mean and dangerous. It's your ultimate aircraft

The F-15 is another golden nidle which is more than capable of dning the job



A direct hit on an enemy ace. Check out the radar to see how many more are around. Your job is nowhere near done yet



An enemy plane is targeted for some missile action. Knowing when to release them is something you'll learn

Raging Skies

► spent on it to make things as realistic as possible whilst keeping it as playable and fun as is humanly possible.

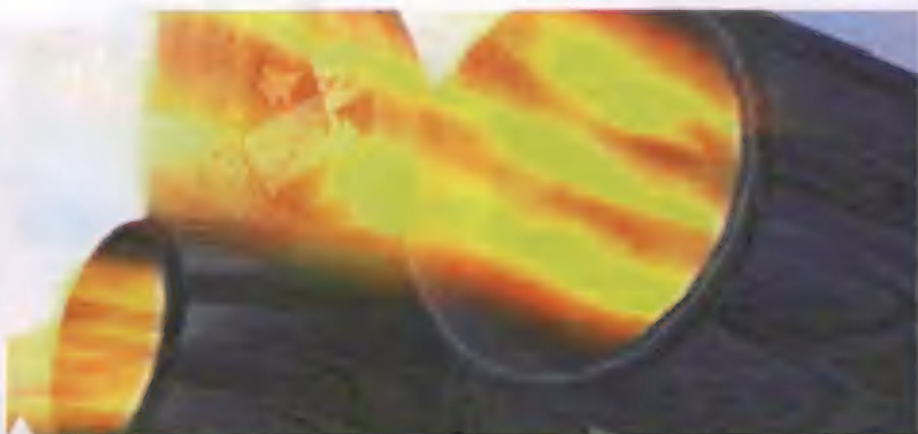
An impressive yet predictable intro sequence shows a lone plane taking off and ploughing headlong into a dogfight with numerous enemy aircraft. After winning in true Tom Cruise style he joins his cronies for some more shooting at the enemy theatrics and then well, that's your lot.

If there is a major problem with Raging Skies it lies in the fact that the aircraft seem to move at such a sluggish pace the feeling of actually piloting a supersonic fighter is lost. It feels more like you're in control of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang than a state of the art fighter. Even accelerating and decelerating makes little or no difference to the feeling of speed. The only change seems to be to the sound of the jet engines.

However, changing speed does make a difference if you are in a dogfight as, rather than overtaking an enemy plane, matching his speed and positioning yourself behind it will give you a clearer chance to blast it from the skies.

Dodging incoming missiles will also be paramount to survival. Some missions will involve spending more time avoiding enemy gunfire than engaging them in combat. Somehow you've got to find a way of successfully executing both within the time restriction. This is no mean feat and will require plenty of skill and precision.

The usual array of options will make your task either more difficult or to be frank, a doddle. The joystick can be reconfigured to suit any individual but



Check out the afterburner in the rather impressive intro sequence. Watch what's in store in the missions ahead. It's by no means a clean-cut affair and plenty of blood will be shed before the day is won

the default keys won't pose too much of a problem for anybody. The skill levels can be changed to your advantage. Saving your game seems to be a little confusing and to be honest it's still not been sussed out by any of us here.

The whole of the scenery (albeit pretty flat on the whole) is detailed and things do look incredibly realistic as you gradually get in closer to objects both in the sky and on the ground. This is something which has obviously had some time spent on getting exactly right. You can't help but wonder what it would be like if more time had been spent on getting the speed up to scratch. But then I suppose the fine detail may have been sacrificed to a certain degree.

An option which some players may find absorbing

is the linked duel which is on offer. This allows you to pit wits against a friend in a one-on-one battle to the death.

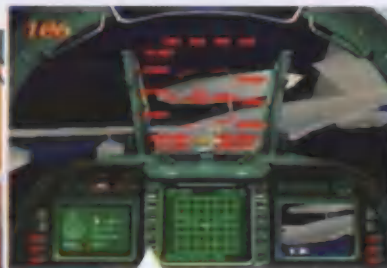
To try to boost the overall atmosphere there's some rock guitar soundtrack and plenty of jet or helicopter sounds which gradually become more audible as you get closer to the enemy not to mention the sound of explosions and missiles brushing by.

Shouts always warn that a missile is on your tail but the warnings really must come from nowhere as you are stupidly left to tackle entire squadrons/fleets/battalions single handedly. Quite why remains a mystery.

Although it's a little slow paced for a while the action eventually hots up to offer a fair challenge to any games player.



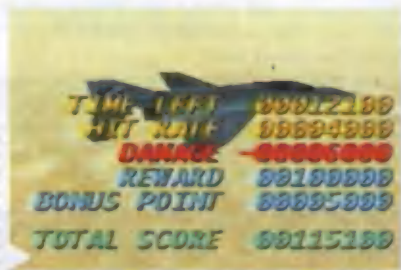
What a lovely horizon. Shame about the MiG though so methinks a swift sidewinder should clear the way



The red on your targeting device means you'd better get out of the way as you've been shot at. Otherwise you'll hit the plane ahead



The Phantom successfully clears the first level with minimum damage. A round of applause is in order. Will the next mission be as fruitful?



PRO SCORE

GAME Raging Skies
CONTACT 0171-447 1600

GENRE Arcade flight sim
RELEASE DATE Out now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 7

Although it takes a while for the challenge to begin rolling, Raging Skies eventually becomes a more rewarding arcade flight simulation than you may have first believed. With numerous options available from the skill level to exactly which weapons and in what quantity you will be taking on your mission, there's more to this than just leaping into the cockpit and blowing enemies from the sky. Thankfully it's not by definition a true flight sim and for this reason it's alright by me.

7
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE Didn't excite me that much, but I expect there must be some depth to it all

JAY If only all flying games were as easy to pick up and play as this

ALEX Flight sims aren't my cup of tea, but Raging Skies isn't big on the technical side, so I don't mind it

THE ADDISON ART THERAPY GROUP

J. BERNSTEIN PH.D., A.T.R., LCOW
S. LUDWIN PH.D. PH.D., A.T.R., NCC
S. GORMAN PH.D., A.T.R., LMFT

CONFIDENTIAL

Dr Phillip Stern,
The Stern Psychiatric Practice,
Suite #392,
1602 Vermont Avenue,
Addison, Illinois.

Dear Doctor Stern,

Here is the outcome of art therapy sessions, with the patient, Chris Deering (45), whom you referred on 6.12.96.

Session 1

The patient was offered various art mediums. He rejected more conventional crayons, pencils and paints - preferring to build a 3D structure out of boxes and other materials. He insisted the structure be built on a piece of wasteground, outside my studio. He told me the ground was suitable for his planned "40 million dollar development".

Session 2

I arrived at the wasteground, to find 60 tonnes of concrete mix being delivered by truck. Mr Deering had ordered the concrete by phone. I cancelled the order and explained to Mr Deering that we didn't have the money to build 'real' buildings. He laughed and told me "not to worry", he was a "tycoon".

Session 3

Mr Deering finished building his 'development', complete with railway tracks and train (see enclosed photographs). He was disappointed with the finished structure, as the train didn't move like the one in his PlayStation video game 'A IV Evolution Global'. After viewing this game, I believe it could be responsible for Mr Deering's 'tycoon' delusions.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Gorman

Sue Gorman

6 HENRY FORD AVENUE, ADDISON, IL, 07145

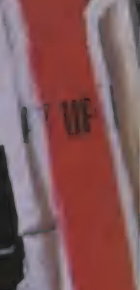
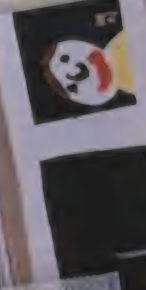
SONY



DO NOT

UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER
OF PLAYSTATION

CONFIDENTIAL



Casper

Forget that the film came out ages ago. Forget that it wasn't very good. Forget any preconceptions you may have had that Casper is a platform game, and you might just find yourself having a surprisingly good time



You need to get the spears pointing the right way to open a nearby door. Is there a clue around?



Ah, this spear pointing diagram might just have something to do with the puzzle I suppose



Being a haunted house I suppose rocking chairs moving of their own free will is not unusual



The key lies tantalisingly out of reach behind the barricaded door. Chances are you'll need to solve this puzzle before you can progress much further as this particular key is quite important

If Casper the Friendly Ghost had been a more successful film, Interplay would have been in serious danger of having missed the boat. The games buying public is a fickle bunch and if you get a licence you have to make sure that the timing is spot on if it's relating to either an event or, in this case, a film.

US Gold has apparently suffered badly as a result of being slightly awry with the timing of the release of its superb footy game, Olympic Soccer. Despite being almost universally acclaimed as one of the most playable, enjoyable and realistic football games ever, it's sold like bacon butties at a barmitzvah.

Reason: Olympic fever had already died down (or more accurately, never really got going in this country) by the time the game appeared on the shelves, and hence it was spurned by many looking for a slightly more credible licence. Sad admittedly; a mistake most certainly (because after all, it's the game that counts); but undoubtedly the nature of the beast so to speak.

But I don't think Casper will suffer the same fate, at least, not for the same reason. It may well sell badly but it won't be as a result of 'Casper fever' having already waned, as a blockbuster it most certainly wasn't. But if it does, that would be a shame as well, because it's not half bad.

The surprising thing is that Interplay has resisted the temptation to churn out a formula platformer and gone for something altogether more cerebral, and even sort of original. It's a kind of cross between a platform game and an adventure I suppose - with the emphasis more on the adventure side.

The plot, I assume, having never seen the film,

follows the original quite closely. It's certainly how I imagined it. The setting is Whipstaff Manor, a mansion vacated by all but spooks and spectres for more than a century.

No one seems particularly keen to move in because, every time a 'fleshie' comes near the house the not-so-gruesome ghouls set out to scare them away, to prevent anyone from disturbing their peaceful existence.

That's all about to change though. Whipstaff Manor is now the property of ill tempered heiress Carrigan Crittenden who's heard the rumour that buried deep within the manor is a treasure so wondrous that she'll stop at nothing to get her hands on it.

She turns out to be no match for the crafty ghosts though, who soon drive her away. Undeterred she hires Dr James Harvey, the world's only 'psychiatrist to the dead' who agrees to move into the mansion - with his 12-year-old daughter Kat for some reason - and attempt to reason with the ghosts.

You play Casper, the youngest of the Whipstaff ghosts. The other three are amusingly named uncles Stretch, Stinkie and Fatso.

While these odious relatives enjoy nothing more than terrifying the life out of any 'fleshie' who dares set foot inside, you're much nicer - bored, lonely and just don't enjoy frightening people. You want a friend and on spying Kat decide to try and befriend her.

Being a ghost, of course, and her a 12-year-old girl, this is not as easy as it would be for a normal young boy. But as a clever bloke you decide a peace offering might help and that becomes the

Casper's always hungry and feeding him ensures he can take more damage



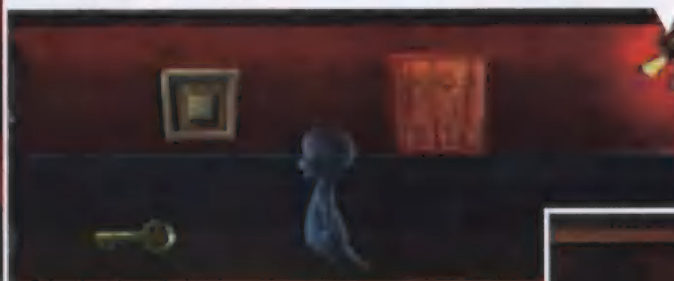
To solve this particular puzzle you need to find the four pieces of the jigsaw. This is done by solving other, smaller puzzles, and then reconstructing them in a frame





Now this'll come in very handy. It allows you to turn into a puff of smoke and travel about in the air vents

The switch on the wall will usually do one of two things - either open a door or move the painting to its right



Once you can turn into smoke a lot more of Whipstaff Manor is accessible

first task. You must set off in search of a suitable present and then approach and introduce yourself without her feeling the need to rush off and change her underwear as soon as you show your face.

The game is mainly exploration based and, certainly early on, the puzzles have obviously been designed with quite a young audience in mind. That's not to say they're easy - just not exactly complex. Flick a switch to open a door elsewhere, match the position of the spears on suits of armour to that on a handy diagram on the wall nearby, again to open a door and so on. So you can't knock it for that.

Your initial reaction will undoubtedly be one of derision, as was mine, due to the simplicity of it all, but in no time you'll have subconsciously slipped into enjoying it and, if you were to look in a mirror while playing, I bet you would be smiling.

Such is Casper's charm. It's one of those games that is incredibly difficult to dislike. It's not technologically advanced, it doesn't look all that brilliant, the style is not going to win any game design awards but it's an infectious mix that, try as you might, you can't dislike. I tried and I'm the toughest of critics.

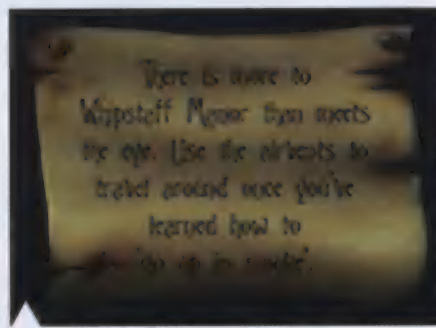
Whatever you do don't invite your mates round for a game though - this is no Tekken 2. Being good at it will not make you look big or clever in front of your friends.

What it will do though is, when played on your own, give you a feeling of satisfaction and a generally warm glow inside at the sickly sweet wholesomeness of it all.

Now where's Loaded so I can get all this 'niceness' out of my system?



The Professor and his daughter arrive at the manor, not knowing what's in store



Various clues are dotted around the place and can very often point you in the right direction



I doubt many people would actually be all that scared if they met Casper face to face

Whipstaff Manor - certainly not a place for the fainthearted if you ask me



PRXO SCORE

GAME Casper
CONTACT 01235 812666

GENRE Adventure
RELEASE DATE Out Now

SOFTWARE HOUSE Interplay
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 7

Not a great game and one that would probably be more at home on a SNES than a PlayStation, most aspects of Casper shout 'average' at the top of their voices. But it's run-of-the-mill stuff all wrapped up in a nice, happy package that's completely and utterly inoffensive. It's hard to criticise because you feel guilty for doing so more than anything, but there's also the fact that, as a game, it's good fun and most will enjoy playing it. Would I pay money for it? Well, no, but I've seen far worse games than this up near the top of the charts.

7
OVERALL OUTTA 10

JAY A strong title for the kiddy end of the market, but older, more hardened gamers may find it too tedious

ANDY Far too immature for someone of my intellect. Definitely only for pre-pubescent PlayStation owners

ALEX Not the best film license ever, but it does hold certain appeal if you want a break from the norm

CHEESY'S



And no wonder when w
runaway mine carts, f
dangerous blobs of... of
evil, power hungry, mania

ocean

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W A PICKLE

...uding polka dotted aliens, super heated blast furnaces,
...anger, fine breathing chilli peppers and one mad
...ociable scientist are all out to get him.



Wally Pickle



Final Doom

First the PC was awarded the delights of Doom and its sequels. Now the follow-up to the first PlayStation release is grabbing the attention. But has it got what it takes to become a best-seller?



Be prepared for enemies from anywhere. They come out of nowhere and cause major problems

This ground level view can only mean one thing - you're dead. Time to start again



A lost soul finds you an interesting proposition so blast it away to prevent further intervention from these fast moving blighters



Wearing protective suits in this green sludge stuff is an important idea - so important it can't be stressed enough

Think of Doom and then think of another wedge of levels to tackle. Well, that's exactly what Final Doom delivers. More of the same is the cry given out and yes it is - only the opposition is more intense than ever before.

The first disc had the original game with Doom 2 which offered countless hours of puzzling levels and frantic blasting. With numerous skill levels you could progress from the simple I Am A Wimp level to Ultra Violence.

One thing you can rely on in Final Doom is big, big levels. From the outset they are crammed with enemies, not just the odd enemy here and there, more a barrage of attack from all sides. Assuming you're not playing on Wimp level of course. Ultra

Take some of these bullets my good friend. Begone mine enemy and be sure to go back from whence you came

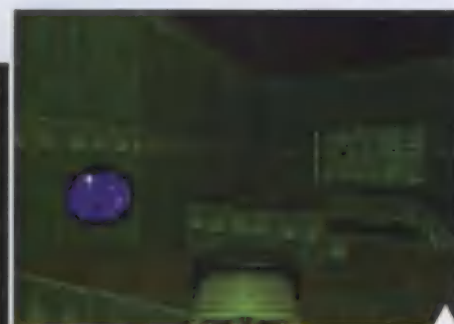


Violence is only for those quick of reaction and tougher than Arnie.

Doom is done and dusted on the PC and will soon be wound up on the PlayStation as there's only so much you can do at the end of the day. Others will continue copying this style in an attempt at bettering the first person perspective shooters but in terms of challenge and longevity it will prove tricky to improve on this classic.

The closest rival to the Doom series has been Alien Trilogy, which in retrospect was far too simple to complete. To control your player it's exactly the same as the first Doom, making it just as easy as before..

Those who don't have the faintest idea will soon



You'll be grateful for the bonuses you can pick up and this will assist in your survival in tough times





Guess which colour key you'll need to get through this door? Can you? Eh?



Quick reload before he gets a shot in at you! One shot on target should do the trick



You now have to work out exactly how to reach this key. Where could that switch be?

learn exactly what does what on the D-pad and it will become second nature. Soon you'll be stepping to one side as laser shots brush past your shoulder and blasting the enemies like there's no tomorrow.

GT Interactive has once again teamed up with Williams who was responsible for the original on the PlayStation. With games like Resident Evil around, the graphics look a little dated, but with a few tweaks in terms of weapons and more detail in the twisting corridors there have been improvements all round.

The gameplay has been polished – whereas the first Doom disc could only be controlled with the standard PlayStation pad, Final Doom has been ►



The map shows the size of the challenge you must face in each level. Secret locations are shown too

The good, the bad and the rank – a run through the great pretenders



ALIEN TRILOGY

Arguably the most polished first person perspective shoot'em-up to appear to date. Combining elements of all three films it contains more in terms of graphics and gloomy atmosphere than longevity. Each level features numerous stages but can be completed in next to no time



KILEAK THE BLOOD

Another release which relies heavily on the atmosphere rather than all out blasting. Kileak was put out in the early days of the PlayStation and as such couldn't reach the user base that today's releases can. That's not to say it can't be bought now though. You could definitely do much worse



EXPERT

An absolutely drab affair. Thankfully it only appeared on import and we won't be forced to endure an official release in the near future. Phew! An absolute stinker all round. This must be avoided at all costs otherwise the PlayStation will be getting a bad name for itself



PO'ED

A conversion of the 3DO release made its way to the PlayStation with a lame reaction. Tons of levels and a frying pan as a default weapon doesn't work when combined with some decidedly dodgy gameplay. If more attention had been paid to this release it might have been a corker



DEF CON 5

A little different this one as it contains more puzzles and strategies than most. You are dropped on to a mining planet to relieve the soldiers guarding it and must install an automatic defence system. Unfortunately you're left alone when an invasion takes place – this of course you must thwart at all costs



DOOM

By far the finest blaster all round with the one disc containing two complete games. Doom and Ultimate Doom were responsible for the plethora of other releases mentioned here and Doom is still the one to beat. It's a classic and no mistake. Everything else pales in comparison with this ground-breaking release

Final Doom

► developed for use with a mouse. Now you can turn on a sixpence with alarming pace while blasting the enemies. The faster you move the mouse the faster you will move – just as you'd hope and expect.

Other than the fact that there are 30 new levels, each offering a unique challenge as only Doom can, the difference is that things are darker, creepier, bigger and trickier. It's gonna take forever to complete, assuming you don't wimp out and breeze through on the easy skill levels. Even then it's no simple stroll.

A healthy knowledge of the original will come in handy as the enemies are the same, giving you prior knowledge as to which weapon to use on which nasty. Whether you will be successful or not is a different matter entirely.

Unfortunately there are a few annoyances, the greatest being when you seemingly get stuck against a wall. This has apparently been ironed out but does still occur from time to time. In spite of this there's nothing more annoying than hugging a wall for safety, getting stuck there whilst an enemy

pumps bullets into your fragile body and dying unnecessarily.

Although there are only 30 levels they will take some time to complete but does this warrant the price tag? For the money I'd expect more in the way of improvements and additions. All the original weapons and enemies are still here so there's nothing particularly new about the whole thing. As a result this seems to be a data disc incorporating some new levels. And that's it. Don't be fooled into thinking that this is in any way a bad game however, as it's still one of the most adrenaline fuelled blasters ever to see the light of day.

Many levels will require careful exploration through darkness with creepy surroundings where nothing much seems to happen until suddenly the action is so frantic and instant you have next to no time to think about it. This was the beauty of Doom and is an element which hasn't been lost on this latest incarnation.

The overall look and feel of Final Doom is as impressive as the last release but lends you a slight vision of what's in store when Quake, the next instalment in the series, arrives in which things look different with lots of new scenery and enemies in the offing.

The blood and guts are still well and truly in place throughout every stage of Final Doom. Your guns will be required to stand up to any enemy threat



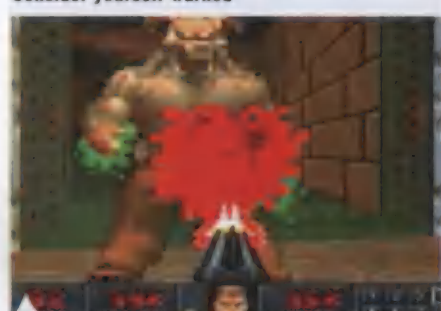
The semi invisible monsters can be seen quite easily here but be prepared for an attack from them in the dark as this is when they're most dangerous



Step cautiously into this courtyard. Looks like there's a first aid pack over at the far wall. Should you take the risk of trying to retrieve it

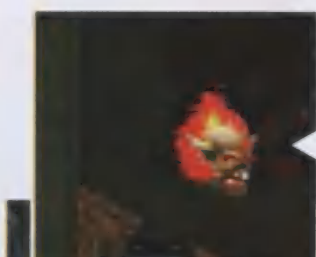


What has this switch done. About turn and find out. The effect could be anywhere in the level. Consider yourself warned



Anybody who's played the original will know that these blighters mean plenty of business and seem to take forever to die

A particularly tricky section of this level and no mistake. Caution and plenty of energy will be required



This chain gun is far and away the most effective weapon in close combat. Enemies should fall with alarming regularity

PRO SCORE

GAME Final Doom
CONTACT 0171-265 3791

GENRE Shoot'em-up
RELEASE DATE November

SOFTWARE HOUSE GT Interactive
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 8
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 9

While Final Doom doesn't break any new ground in terms of gameplay from its predecessor, the massive levels will have you twisting and turning like there's no tomorrow. The puzzles are more complex in their entirety and the atmosphere has a lot more extreme. The only downers are the occasional sticking to walls and the fact it's another full priced game which doesn't break any new ground for the series. Still, it's gonna be massive and is, at the end of the day, better than the competition

8 1/2
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE Doom has become an established name that's been milked too often. And I never really liked it anyway

JAY Still a classy game full of excitement, but for me a cut-price upgrade CD would have been better

ALEX Not exactly value for money, but if you're a diehard Doomster then you'll love the extended levels

Subterranean BUZZ

Live Indoors

"as flash a shoot 'em up
as they come"
OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

"...the most frantic and compulsive
video game ever created"
GAME PRO

"If only all PlayStation games
looked this good"
PLAYSTATION POWER

"...stylish and atmospheric...
with amazing speed and fluidity"
EDGE

"Who needs hallucinogenic
love drugs when you've
got Tunnel B1"
EDGE

TUNNEL B1

sponsored by



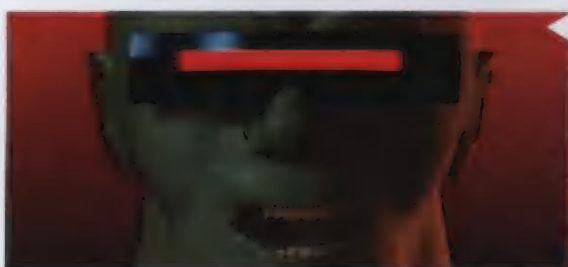
FROM
ocean

NEON

<http://www.ocean.co.uk>

Pitball

Why is it that all futuristic sports seem to revolve around beating your opponents to a bloody pulp and chucking a metal ball into a hole? I wouldn't fancy doing PE if I was at school in 25 years I can tell you!



Riot control on Earth is a very dangerous business these days, hence characters such as this nasty piece of work are now there to keep the peace

The action hots up when you get to grips with the special moves, and fireballs start to flizz across the screen



The teams are colourful and friendly looking for the most part, but the in-game action is far from pleasant

Meet the contestants



Team: SHRAPNEL & KRUSH

Profile: As agile and strong on land as they are in the water, Shrapnel & Krush have mastered the secret arts of Zeta, and have harnessed the unstoppable power of the sea. These unique abilities have made the Arguons a formidable name on the Pitball circuit



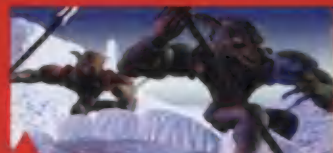
Team: BLUBBA AND GUNGE

Profile: The unlikeliest entrants in the tournament, these two are not only made of mud and stones, but also can spew rocks and lava from their bodies. They use this inbuilt weaponry when defending their sacred temple from alien treasure hunters and enemy Slorillians



Team: SHANILLA & KAREEN

Profile: The Tcharid Queen decides the vocation of all new-born Tcharids, so Shanilla and Kareen's athletic training has been intensive from birth. Since then they have become fast and agile, and particular favourites of their Queen. This is their debut tournament



Team: RIPSAW & SAVLI

Profile: With no formal training, and using glove technology clearly donated by a more advanced people, the Lykiri's techniques are quick, scrappy and effective. Using their icy powers they prove more of an obstacle than first impressions might suggest. Sly and talented

Pitball is apparently the 'roughest, toughest, slam 'n' jamminest, full-on contact sport' of the 23rd century, and I wouldn't argue with that. I used to play Rugby League at school which was a rough game at the best of times, but if you went round your mates asking if anyone 'fancied a quick game of Pitball' I don't think you'd get many takers.

The game is similar in some ways to *Psygnosis'* forthcoming *Riot*, but Warner has opted for two-a-side action in which the ultimate – and only – objective is to get the ball into the goal at one end of the court more times than the opposing team in the allotted time, as opposed to the team game favoured by *Psygnosis*.

The rules are... well, actually there aren't any, but then you were expecting me to say that. I suppose it'd be difficult to regulate a game in which the punches and kicks are flying in all the time and competitor's have even been known to let the odd nuclear warhead loose every once in a while just to get that extra little edge.

And of course, when you've seen some of the weird and, quite frankly bizarre teams that compete in the championship I think you'll agree there'd be

no point because they probably wouldn't even listen if you tried. So nobody ever bothered, and Pitball evolved as a sport.

Four players compete in each game, two on each team, and with a multi-tap four players can participate at once, with each controlling an individual team member. This is where the game really comes into its own, as do most multi-player challenges, but Pitball's one-player mode is surprisingly good as well.

Strangely, even in one-player mode you only control one of the four players (or should that be combatants?) and the other three are controlled by the PlayStation. This can be a help at first while you're learning the fundamentals because your team member can usually keep you in contention at least early on. The best tactic at this stage is to get the ball to him as quickly as you can and sit back and watch.

It won't be long though, before you'll feel confident enough to start getting in the game and you'll be making telling runs into space, setting yourself up sweetly for that killer dunk into the hole to steal the game. There's more to this than

initially meets the eye though. The controls are fairly simple to get to grips with – even the special moves are quite easy to pull off – but the numerous subtle nuances will take many hours of play to master.

For instance, to score a goal you need to hold down the second right shoulder button until the ball changes from a glowing white to a glowing red. Then and only then will you be able to score, but I lost count of the number of times I thought I'd scored only to see the ball bounce back out because I'd forgotten to change the colour.

And then there's the aftertouch. For a while I was bemused by how the computer players seemed to have very little trouble getting the ball at least close to the goal, until I realised that you can put greatly exaggerated swerve on shots and bend them in from just about any angle under 45 degrees.

Pitball is therefore, not the simple, mindless, violent sports game I had pictured. There's a full season mode with player transfers and such like as well as the obligatory exhibition matches and practice modes and this provides a genuinely long lasting challenge.

The game is packed with little touches that make



Each team can be modified considerably in management mode, and this adds a whole new dimension to the game



The ultimate aim is to get the pulsing ball into one of the tiny little holes at either end of the playing arena



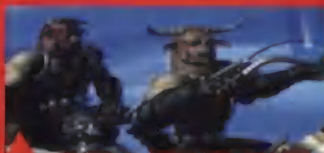
A bit of a punch up has developed but no one seems to have noticed that the ball is nowhere near the action



Team: BLADE & SABER
Profile: Two robotic knights from a mystical order of cybernetic holy warriors. They are bristling with sharp knives - particularly on their gloves, which are detachable and can spin at supersonic speed. They also utilise ultra-high technology and wield it like ancient magic



Team: GAIUS & JULIUS
Profile: The ancients - their real name is apparently unpronounceable to humans - are the rulers of their sector. They are presided over by their incredibly old emperor, Gaius and Julius are his top generals and personal bodyguards and are a tough pair to handle



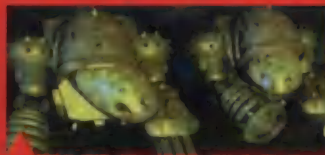
Team: STAMPEDE & RAWHIDE
Profile: After being dominated by the gorilla-like ancients for hundreds of years, the now nomadic Torons are their sworn enemies. Experts in creating technology from junk, Stampede and Rawhide engineered their gloves from leftover parts of their home-made space bikes



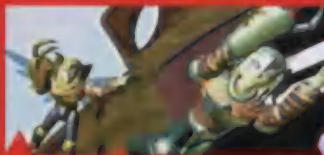
Team: SPEEDSTAR & ASH
Profile: Trained by the originators of Pitball, Speedstar and Ash use the powerful spirits of those now deceased athletes as part of their weaponry. Long-time champions of the galaxy, their title was recently taken by a mysterious team from an unknown planet



Team: MELI & SARA
Profile: Two marines from a specialist squad handling riots on old Earth. Experts in weaponry and heavy robotic artillery, they are more than a match for the mutant criminals on their world, and are among the top contenders for this year's title



Team: KI-TAR & TRI-ANG
Profile: These small octopus-like creatures are noble outside their huge robotic suits, except on their home world which they have ruined with destructive weapons. They are testing a new type of faster and more agile suit, specifically adapted for battle sports



Team: ICARUS & THORAX
Profile: Although prohibited from over-using their flying powers in the pit, Icarus and Thorax still have plenty of potential to be this year's champs. The magical forces in their planet's atmosphere have resulted in a range of colourful and lethal attacks



Team: JAZZ AND FUNK
Profile: Pitball presented the ideal opportunity for these two cheeky young aliens to rebel against their stuffy elders. The smallest of the challengers in the tourney, they may look easy targets but they boast a formidable display of fast and explosive attacks

you sit up and take notice as well, and all this on top of an already sound basic offering make this surprisingly better than anticipated. I suppose the best way to describe the style is two-on-two basketball with explosions, punches and kicks thrown in for good measure, but even that's not spot on.

The only real gripe I have is that the presentation of the menus and option screens is a touch on the tacky side and amazingly appears to be in a low resolution for some reason. This leads to jagged edges at times, but if that's all I can find to moan about, it can't be all that bad!



The game's graphical style changes completely at times. For instance, this cartoon sequence is totally out of place when it appears

Win the championship and you're treated to an FMV sequence showing your team in a natural environment



PRXO SCORE

GAME Darkstalkers
CONTACT 0171-368 2222

GENRE Beat'em-up
RELEASE DATE October

SOFTWARE HOUSE Capcom/Virgin
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8

If you ignore the rosey graphics and spend some quality time with this you'll realise, as I did, just how much it has to offer. The difficulty settings put the learning curve at the right level for everyone and the tactical side should satisfy those who like to plan out a strategy for success. It's a fast action game at heart though, and one done in the best traditions of both the sport and beat'em-up genres. Rarely do we see a mixture turn out this well, but Pitball has blended numerous game styles almost seamlessly.

8
OVERALL
OUTTA 10

STEVE Good quality beat'em-up in the Street Fighter mould. A nice change from all that 3D nonsense

ANDY Good old Capcom. Yet another take on Street Fighter. Stop it now!

ALEX Very similar to Street Fighter Alpha/Zero, but the protagonists just don't have the same panache

Starwinder

The Race to Epsilon Indi

Wipeout stunned us all and left many developers desperately trying to recreate those adrenaline pumping thrills for one of their own titles. Well, Mindscape might just have pulled it off...



You are Connor Rhodes, rookie pilot with balls the size of over-ripe water melons and a cod piece to match! Wayhey!

Three, two, one... GO! Red sky at night, psycho zero gravity racers delight. Or something



You must complete race quadrants if you want to progress

Hit the ramps too hard and you'll spin right off the track into deepest space. Gulp!



A handy action replay is provided, allowing you to view your previous race and spot what went wrong and where

One of the more basic courses during play



Think speed, think space ships, think g-force, think intergalactic racing, think homing missiles, think frantically trying to qualify for the next round of space race shenanigans, think excitement, think erm... you're thinking about Wipeout aren't you? Yes you are. I know I am. Everybody does when software of this sort turns up on the PlayStation, and I'm no exception. Wipeout was such a ground-breaking, mould-shattering game that anyone contemplating releasing anything slightly similar on Sony's wonder machine is either going to get praised to high heaven for recreating such a thrilling piece of software to the equivalent standard, or alternatively get slagged off to the end of time for even attempting such a mammoth task that results in a shoddy poor man's version that no-one will look at twice. Well Mindscape have attempted the impossible and against all the odds they've come up with something quite, well... nice.

Basically, the whole deal behind Starwinder is this: You are Connor Rhodes, a race challenger from the recently-discovered watery planet Earth and you've arrived in the middle of the Milky Way to compete in some interstellar bumper car bonanza. The races are traditionally held on various Rails – huge great streamlined rollercoaster type structures

that are scattered through out the galaxy – with the main target being the final Rail at Epsilon Indi. To reach this final goal is considered a great racing honour by everyone involved and the competition for this goal is somewhat fearsome.

Competitors are required to speed along the rails until they hit the finishing line and on the way they can simply swerve around their opponents, or blast them from the heavens with one or more of the mass arsenal that can be collected on route.

No-one knows why the Rails are there, they are considered remnants of an unknown past and, frankly, most of the people involved aren't all that bothered about finding out the truth behind them either. Only one piece of Rail history is common knowledge however, and that's the fact that if you steer your craft towards the Rail, you'll speed up dramatically. Fly away from it and – surprise, surprise – you'll slow down. All good helpful stuff you'll no doubt agree. Anyway, you've got a horde of dangerous alien opponents to race against on your way to Epsilon Indi as well as over 35 different Rails to master, and to top it all off you're considered by all involved to be the rank earthling outsider. You have no right to win this 'tournament' or the honour that comes with victory, and as a result you'll have to

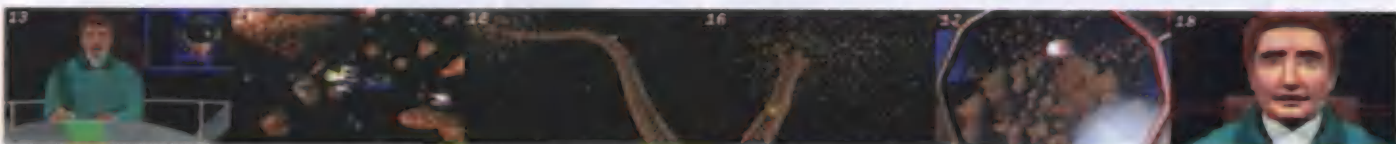
Is this the end of the road for Rhodes?



1. 'Connor Rhodes wins the tournament, but will he discover the true secret of The Rails?' 2. 'What the...' 3. 'Where the hell did that come from?' 4. 'I don't like the look of this...' 5. '... but I wonder what'll happen if I just...' 6. '...ram this bit in here?'



7. 'Oh shhhllllllllttttt!' 8. The strange orb reappears outside the craft... 9. ...leaving our Connor all confused, like. 10. Eventually, after much pondering, he begins to chase after it... 11. ...for absolutely yonks! 12. News Update! Special Report. Special Report...



13. 'Yes race fans, it seems as if Connor Rhodes has gone gaga... 14. ...he's flying through an asteroid belt for God's sake!' 15. 'But what's this?' 16. 'Another Rail is beginning to form...' 17. '...and Connor's riding it!' 18. 'Oh no. Turn Connor. turn!'



19. 'Oh bugger! There goes my No Claims' 20. Smash! 21. Pop! 22. Kaboom! 23. But wait! He's alive, he's alive! But how?
24. 'Blimey, who would have thought it? I'm in another time dimension which leaves me a bit of scope for a fancy sequel! Hurrah!'

risk life and limb if you want to prove all the aliens wrong. Good luck space boy.

The whole thing is presented to you in the form of an intergalactic Grandstand sports show – over 50 minutes of it – complete with its very own cyber Dickie Davies (Barlow Lens) who not only comments on the forthcoming and previous races, but also entertains you with numerous facts and figures of everyone involved and even goes into the pits to give you up-to-the-minute reports on the drivers' feelings and hopes for the next race. These rendered backstage tours have been done superbly. Not only are they comical and original, they give the game a true storyline in a new and different approach. Cut scenes also have the rival drivers/pilots/whatever you want to call 'em, putting on the pressure and trying to psych you out for the next race with their hard words and threats. Highly entertaining of course, but all complete nonsense nevertheless.

So, after all the flashy intros and cut scenes, is it playable? Does it match the Wipeout criteria? Or is it simply just another slow, drab and down right dodgy racer? Well, yes and no really. Admittedly things can get very frantic when whizzing through, on and around the various Rails and having the ability to leave the track – although not all that ▶



Make use of the shoulder buttons and you'll rotate your craft with relative ease around tight bends.

Tianna Stone poses for our camera

Starwinder

► useful – adds the feeling of being slightly more in control than that of the handling of the crafts available in Wipeout. Each Rail offers obstacles as well as pick-ups and most of the weapons you collect are not only useful and easy to use, but also look the part too, as do most of the graphical effects throughout Starwinder.

This game looks like it has had a great deal of time spent on it and as a result appears highly polished and visually pleasing (although the graphics aren't as spectacular as those in Wipeout) but the main factor behind any 'good' game doesn't boil down to just fancy intros and in-game graphics that look good enough to eat though does it? Oh no, it's how good the thing plays that's important! And although Starwinder is fun to play and an excellent alternative to the likes of big daddy Wipeout, I feel that where it trips up is in its difficulty settings.

Wipeout's main gripe was the fact that it was a tad too tough for most people and Starwinder's, unfortunately, is that it's too easy. Admittedly things can get sweaty during the later levels and getting to grips with the twisting facilities of your craft can prove quite difficult, but at the end of the day your average games player should plough through quite a sizeable chunk of Starwinder on their first few attempts – especially with the continue option tempting you back for more. The Rails twist and turn like huge spiralling acid-constructed tunnels and provide the player with plenty of split-second decisions to make in order to complete the course successfully, but the added feature that allows you to spin off the Rails may be new and original but almost always ends up with you losing your bearings on where you actually are in the vast galaxy before you, and there-



Missiles come in very useful during some of the hectic races. Just blast 'em and pass 'em!



Woohoo! Spider mazes from deepest Mars bizarrely turn up mid-race for no apparent reason



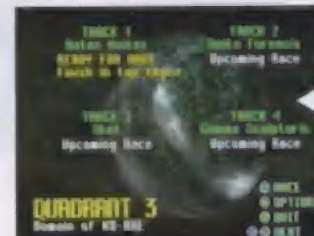
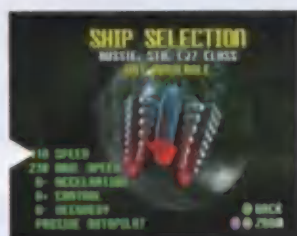
Delightful high-resolution cut sequences flood your screen throughout the game offering helpful advice, and as Ko-Axe above demonstrates, they also offer idle threats from your opponents too

fore you'll almost always wind up crossing the finish line last as opposed to first.

Starwinder is a nice idea with excellent presentation and a quirky little storyline to boot. It offers supersonic racing enjoyment and most people who are drawn towards games such as this will find it a blast I'm sure. Hardened nit-pickers though may find it 'too much' like Wipeout and Mindscape's previous PSX effort, Cyberspeed and that it lacks any real challenge once you've got to grips with all the controls and mastered the use of the handy barrel roll.

Ultimately this will lead to an early completion of the game, and frankly I don't think many gamers would want to do it all over again once they've reached the final finishing post. Starwinder is definitely not the best game in its field, but I think you'll find that it's all good wholesome fun nevertheless. Mindscape should be proud of this beauty, they've developed a playable and entertaining little piece of software which stands way above anything they've produced on the PlayStation to date. A possible case for the old 'try before you buy' though.

You have many differing types of craft to select from. Choose wisely though...



Another race, another town, and guess what – yep, yet another quadrant to conquer



They call this guy Dexter The Terrible. Why? Simply because he's crap



Nuron IX, the mechanoid racer from outta town, has a pre-race chat with host, Barlow Lens

"...the boy done good"

CONNOR RHODES

Barlow the TV anchor man doesn't chat to you, but he grills all the others on race tactics and their performances

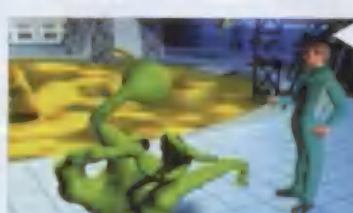
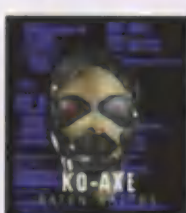


DEXTOR

Taken loser and the one that people laugh out loud at is poor old Dextor. This alien was born to lose and knows it

KO-AXE

This crazy half man half cyborg is your first opponent on the Rails, but fortunately for you he's a bit of a pushover

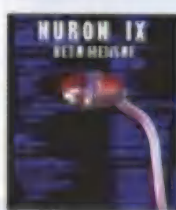


ENGON

A devious shape shifter who will try anything to get to the finish line first. Watch out, Engon can be very tricky indeed

ZACH KILMER

This one plays hard and enjoys ramming his opponents into the oncoming obstacles, so you'd better watch out

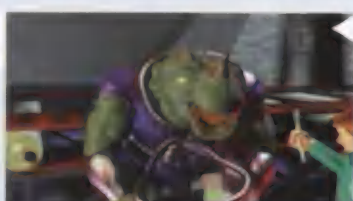


NURON IX

Weird one this. He's a sort of self sufficient space ship with a high powered brain and feelings to match. Odd

TIANNA STONE

Get on the wrong side of Tianna and she'll punish you severely. A bitch with attitude and a quick tongue to boot!



G'THUL GL'HURG

Part time thespian and all-round big bloke, G'Thul is a gentle giant and a relatively easy pilot to leave behind

"Take that, you extra terrestrial space monkey!" Explosions and insults add to the overall feel...



Asteroids can prove tricky to negotiate when travelling at hellishly high speeds



PRO SCORE

GAME Starwinder
CONTACT 01444 246333

GENRE Racing/Shoot'em-up
RELEASE DATE October

SOFTWARE HOUSE Mindscape
PRICE £44.99

GRAPHICS 9
SOUND 9
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 9

Initially comes across as a dodgy Wipeout rip-off, but underneath the surface Starwinder: The Race To Epsilon Indi proves itself to be a well presented, enjoyable little racer with enough supersonic boosts and blasts to make it a hit with certain members of the gaming fraternity - although by no means all of them. There's an easy to use control method, plenty of pick-ups and weaponry plus an abundance of visual treats that all add up to a worthwhile alternative to the racing genre formerly known as Wipeout

7 1/2
OVERALL OUTTA 10

STEVE A bad idea poorly executed. This, in my humble opinion, is on a par with the awful Cyberspeed

ANDY Starwinder is slightly better than Cyberspeed, but it's by no means a Wipeout beater

ALEX Respect for the sports TV angle, but more thought on the gameplay would have been nice

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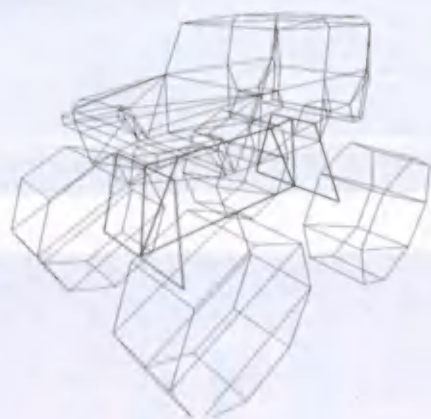
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Keep on trucking



The thrill of the chase. You can't beat it can you? It's what inspires anything from boy racers and joyriders to Formula 1 drivers to take their lives into their own hands time and again behind the wheel of a powerful car. I don't believe that's the only thing that makes race games so amazingly popular though. It's certainly a factor, but the one that over rides even that is that 95% of us are too sensible (or too scared?) to go out and do it for real. We make do with driving home from work in our nice, sensible cars at a nice, sensible speed and then load up Destruction Derby or Ridge Racer Revolution to act in the way that we'd really like to act on the roads if only we weren't so damn sensible (or scared?).

And if you ask me it's a bloody good job! Imagine the chaos if we all drove like we do in Burning Road, or felt safe enough to barge other vehicles off the road like we could in Motor Toon Grand Prix 2. We can't, and we don't, and I'm glad.

But therein also lies the problem for racing games. How do you keep providing that adrenaline rush for the player who's seen it all before? They

can't get much faster, and given the limitations of today's technology they're not going to look much better in the near future so the 'thrill factor' is ever diminishing with each new product that comes out.

As ever, originality is the key and from what I've seen so far a couple of games at least have it. Grand Theft Auto from BMG provides a new twist but that's another story, and Monster Trucks from Psygnosis does as well.

It's a somewhat bizarre cross over of game engines if not game styles. As I said in the introductory preamble anyone who'd played Krazy Ivan (also from Psygnosis) is going to feel at home with the way everything moves around. The speed is at times breathtaking, especially when you consider that the graphical style is that of the highly detailed cars seen in the Destruction Derby games.

To my knowledge though it's the first game to feature the American phenomenon of Monster Truck Racing and PlayStation Pro wondered just what was the inspiration behind the idea. Martin Edmonson, one of the key figures in the games development provided the answers:

Birth of a Monster



These fancy graphics don't just happen you know. Each one starts life as a blank canvas onto which the points that make up the detailed shape of each car are plotted, in this particular instance, a jeep



The points are then given a much more solid feel as the whole thing becomes shaded. This is now basically what you will be driving around in when you start to play the game, all that needs adding now is the detail



Finally the textures and detail are painstakingly added on from every conceivable angle to give the completed vehicle its distinctive look. This long, time consuming process then begins again for the next vehicle in the line

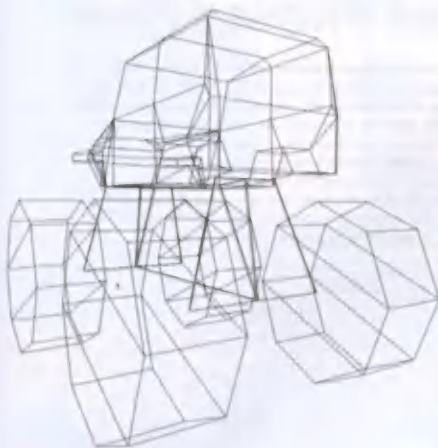
From ideas to icons, the



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Miyuki
Nationality
Japanese
Age
17
Height
5'1"



Name
Karl
Nationality
German
Age
42
Height
6'4"



The race game's been done to death. You'd think it would be difficult to inject some form of originality into a pretty tired genre wouldn't you? Well Psygnosis is having none of that, and using its powerful graphics engine, last seen in Krazy Ivan and the stunning graphical style of Destruction Derby, it has genuinely come up with something a little bit different. With the game slated for release late January '97 Steve McNally took an early look at how it's progressing and how the idea was conceived

'I saw a Monster Truck show in Arizona and was absolutely amazed by the size, the noise and the baying enthusiasm of the huge crowd. Each one of these trucks has a name (Big Foot, Snake Bite, Grave Digger) plastered down its side together with dramatic graphics and bodywork, and each one also has its own band of fiercely loyal fans. The last time I felt that kind of crowd reaction was at a Destruction Derby!'

Sounds to us like a good idea for a game. But then, we've already played an early version so maybe we're a bit biased, Monster Trucks reeks of the smell of potentially massive success. We even enjoyed just driving around in a version with virtually none of the gameplay yet in.

It's incredible to see for example, the independent suspension in action. Yes, each wheel moves as it would on a real truck moving up and down independently to absorb bumps and so on. If it's this exciting now, How good is it going to be when it's finished?

'Monster Trucks is split into two halves, car crushing and endurance racing. Car crushing is

based on the American sport that most people associate Monster Trucks with. Two trucks compete against each other in a stadium, complete with two lines of battered cars. When the flag drops you have two minutes to do as much crushing damage as possible to your line of cars!'

The game seems to me to also be structured very much in the way Destruction Derby was, you know, with two very different sections to play around with (in the earlier games case, racing against other cars, and trying to cause as much damage as possible in the bowl). What's this Endurance Racing all about then?

'The Endurance race takes place on four huge islands littered with real life features and hazards such as hills, cliffs, rivers, lakes and so on. The object is to race between checkpoints in a landscape where you can drive absolutely anywhere, and in any direction you choose. The idea is to find the fastest route to the next checkpoint whilst negotiating the hills and ►



'I saw a Monster Truck show in Arizona and was absolutely amazed by the size, the noise and the baying enthusiasm of the huge crowd!'

Martin Edmonson, Psygnosis

cast of Monster Trucks have come a long way in a very short time indeed



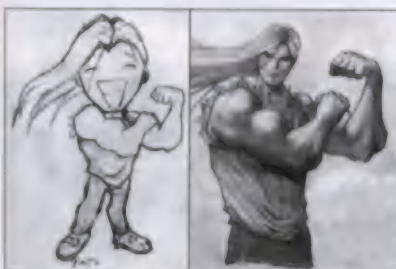
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Height
6'1"



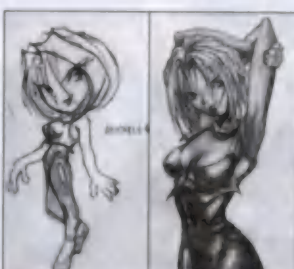
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Nationality
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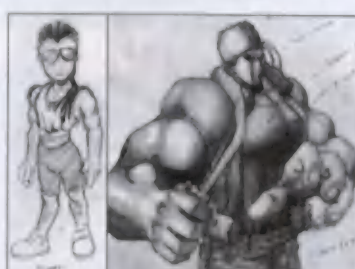
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Nationality
Monacan
Age
19
Height
5'3"



Name
Enzo
Nationality
Italian
Age
25
Height
6'4"



Name
Michelle
Nationality
French
Age
26
Height
5'10"



Name
Bear
Nationality
Russian
Age
31
Height
7'9"



Level Playing Field

This is how each island in *Monster Trucks* starts its life. The designer accurately sets out his ideas on paper, including every detail of the whole six square kilometres and where he wants the objects to be placed. Then this gargantuan amount of information has to be mapped out on a computer before the actual objects can be placed over the top.

To give the programmers a feel for exactly what is required, key points, such as the start and finish parts and any significant bridges/landmarks, are also sketched out to ensure that everything is just as it should be



Keep on trucking



► hazards along the way. Players must try to judge the jumps carefully since landing hard repeatedly will damage the suspension.

The game program uses proper physical models to simulate the suspension so there is a realistic feeling of jumping and bouncing across the landscape as the suspension soaks up the worst of the bumps. Players may come across an obstruction such as a river and must decide whether to wade

through or drive round looking for a bridge, and possibly wasting time.

There's no denying the appeal that *Monster Trucks* will have even in an already over saturated market. It's got at least some originality in there alongside all the other

major qualities that any respectable race game should have. Plus there's a healthy dollop of destruction thrown in as well which should mean that there's something for everyone.

Psychosis really seems to have got its act together at the moment as far as race games go and with a post and pre-Christmas line up that includes this, *Destruction Derby 2* and *Wipeout 2097* it could well have this area sewn up by the second quarter of next year.

As far as I'm concerned it'll make a very nice change from all the run-of-the-mill racers we have to put up with, and as long as it's sufficiently different to *Destruction Derby 2* it should sit nicely on the shelves alongside it.

And having already spent a fair time playing an admittedly very incomplete version I'm fairly confident it won't disappoint. Of course I could be wrong – it has been known to happen in the past. Although not very often.

'Each island is around six square kilometres in size and is made up of over half a million polygons. The limit was not the capacity or the size of the islands, but the time taken to texture and design them.'

Martin Edmonson, Psychosis



OUT ON PLAYSTATION

BURNING ROAD

90%
PLAY MAGAZINE

9/10
GAME PRO

90%
MEAN MACHINES

9/10
PLAYSTATION PSX PRO

**SO REAL
YOU CAN SEE THE
SKIDMARKS**



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The return of the sprocket job

By Jay Sharples



Martin Edmundson has been writing computer games for the past eleven years now. His relationship with Psygnosis started seven years ago with the *Shadow Of The Beast* series, *Ballistix* and – who could forget – *Brian The Lion*. He and his team later moved into the next generation with the PlayStation stunner, *Destruction Derby* and now the busy bunch are currently putting the finishing touches on future chart-busters, *Monster Truck Rally* and *Destruction Derby 2*. We recently caught up with Martin and fired a few DD2-related brain teasers his way, and these were his replies...

PlayStation Pro:

Why do another *Destruction Derby* title instead of moving on to something new?

Martin Edmonson:

Well, after completing the first *Destruction Derby* we realised that it was possible to take the game much further than we did with the allotted time available on the original. It also gave us the chance to address some of the criticisms directed at it. During development we learned many new things about the PlayStation which we simply didn't have the time to exploit in the original – DD2 gave us a chance to use these ideas. It's always the same, at the time of writing DD1 we thought we were pushing the

machine pretty hard. One year on, having discovered new ways of doing things we now think that DD2 pushes the machine much harder than the original. And I suppose that in a year's time it'll be the same story.

So what are the main design and technical differences between DD1 and DD2?

When for starters, after a big crash, the cars now flip and roll over. This is calculated for each car in real time unlike titles such as *Daytona* which have a pre-set sequence. For this reason no two crashes will ever look the same. Usually a car will flip after another car smashes into its side, sending it tumbling down the track earning extra points. As a driver comes tearing round a bend he may have the added hazard of a stricken car left on its side or even its roof! Cars can also now be knocked back onto their wheels and continue if they're not too badly damaged.

I guess there's a load of new crash effects then?

In addition to just smoking, DD2 cars can even catch fire and eventually explode. Also when you scrape your car alongside the barriers it throws up a shower of sparks! Another point is when your car is involved in a very hard front end shunt. This will send the car's bonnet flying into the sky, revealing the engine below, whilst a rear end smash will loose the boot. In another improvement to the DD2 smash system, cars can now lose wheels, which will then affect the cars' handling. For example, if another car crashes hard into your front corner and the car loses a wheel, the steering will become erratic, together with your car dipping forwards onto the broken suspension. You can still drive the car but lose another wheel and it will have no steering, leaving sparks flying up from the wheel arches as you scrape the underside of the track.

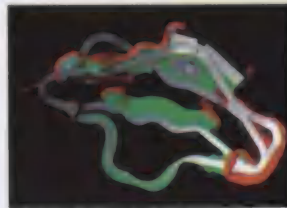
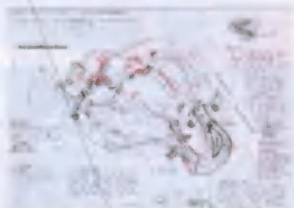
Groovy. How about the tracks – any dramatic changes there?

One of the main criticisms of DD1 was the size and width of the tracks, so they've been vastly improved in DD2. They are now up to eight times longer with much more interesting scenery, the only disadvantage being that the backgrounds must now block in,

"We've taken the game into true 3D with rolls and flips, making the original feel primitive by comparison"

Martin Edmundson – Reflections

Just how do they do that?



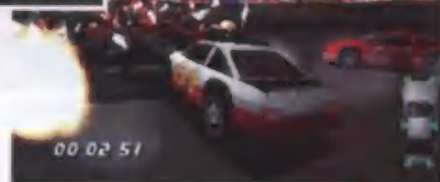
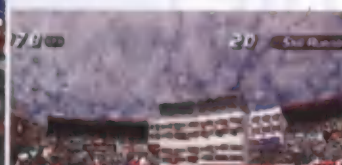
In the beginning the complex tracks of DD2 started out as mere scribbles on a sketch pad. Then, as if by magic, they were transformed into groovy wireframes and then finally, rendered up into the finished article. Like, cosmic man!

ckkeys

They gave you the opportunity to smash cars into smouldering chunks a while back, and now they return with some serious Dukes Of Hazzard-style influences and an overall bigger and better product. Prepare yourself for the destructive demolition joyride of your life as we talk to developers Reflections about flipping motors, groovy Gouraud shading and Bo and Luke Duke...



As you can clearly see by glancing at these awesome screen shots, DD2 looks even better than the original



but we have tried to hide this using corners as best we can. Blocking-in occurs since the PlayStation's hardware only allows objects to be drawn up to a certain distance from the camera - beyond that the polygons simply disappear. We have made more use of hardware effects in the tracks. Another improvement is the addition of hills and banked corners. For this we had to re-write the handling of the cars to take account of jumping off hills and dips and rolling correctly on the banks. The tracks in DD2 make the originals look very simple, but at the time of writing DD1 our main concern was keeping the speed up with 20 cars on-screen at any one time. The knowledge we have gained since then, and applied to DD2 has allowed much more complex scenery.

Any new features on the tracks? Obstacles etc?

Some have hills which make for great Dukes Of Hazard-style jumps. There are also jump and landing ramps built into one of the courses, so you have to judge your speed carefully when approaching it.

What's all this we hear about Pitstops?

One major improvement in the gameplay is that of using the pits. Never was there a game that needed pits more badly than Destruction Derby! After a few minutes - or seconds - wrecking your car, you can pull into the pits and work on the major areas of the car. Dents can be squeezed out of the front, rear and doors in a timed pitstop. We have yet to decide how to limit this - obviously drivers shouldn't be allowed to enter the pits as many times as they like, continuously repairing damage, although any time spent in the pits is time not spent wrecking!

Suspension and steering is another aspect you need to look out for during play isn't it?

Oh yeah, some of the real mechanical effects on the cars can now be seen, such as four wheel independent suspension. As you car corners hard it leans and rocks on the suspension, and braking hard pitches the car forward onto the front wheels. This effect causes the front wheels to bite, allowing wild tail-out slides. If you crash into another car you can see it rock on to its suspension. Another addition is the steering, which allows you to see exactly which direction the wheels are pointing. The power slides with counter steer also look much more realistic.

Has making things look a lot more realistic than they were in DD1 been an important aspect?

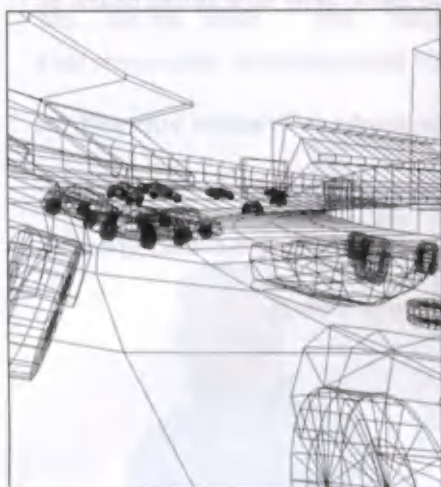
Well, in DD1 all the objects were flat textured and unlit. Lighting adds so much more realism to a scene, so we developed a system for lighting the tracks and cars in real time very efficiently. All of the cars are now Gouraud Shaded so they look much more rounded. The effect can best be seen when a car passes under a street light. The light can be seen to move smoothly over the car's surface or if a car passes through a tunnel, the shadow will pass quickly over the car body. In the daytime tracks, cars are lit by the sun, so depending on the direction of the car, one side will be in darkness.

So, what key differences have been made in gameplay terms?

Quite a few. The game is now easier to play - the car handling is easier and the tracks are

Wireframe wonders

As with almost everything you see in the finished game, the designers have to start the process with a wireframe outline. From here, all the solid colours and final shading get added accordingly



DD2 puts you up against numerous deadly drivers from around the globe. Like these two, for example

The return of the sprocket jockeys

much wider. If you do spin, the width of the tracks now allows much more space to turn your vehicle around. Some people felt that the intensity of the crashes and width of tracks made the stock car racing mode a very random challenge. In DD2 we have the room to make this a playable game in its own right. The option has to be there since sometimes a player may just simply wish to have a normal Daytona-style race – that is what the 'Stock Car Racing' option is for. There is also a little more strategy involved due to the inclusion of pitstops, how long they should be left (in the first half of the race, there are more points to be earned out on the track) and which areas of the car need attention (the

badly damaged rear end that's about to give way, or the less-damaged, but more critical, front end for example). Finally the addition of flips and rolls has given the player more to worry about than simply being spun off the track.

How much of the original code was carried over from DD1 then?

With the exception of parts of the 2D collision maths, nothing was carried over. It really has been a complete re-write. The main game engine had to be re-written to cope with streaming in the larger tracks, and the car dynamics were re-designed to

handle the banked corners and jumps. Obviously the collision routines had to be extended to allow the cars to flip and roll too.

Does DD2 have any design and gameplay features that were carried over from the original?

The basic aim of the game remains to score points by causing as many smash ups as possible. Obviously there are now new ways of doing that, but the whole point of 'Wreckin' Racing' was never to cross the line first. As mentioned before, the straight forward stock car racing where shoving and pushing is allowed but you don't score points for it is retained and is much more competitive than before. Also, the Destruction Derby itself remains, where zooming around the bowl and smashing into everything that moves is the only way to win. Actually it's amazing how some people insist on playing 'Wreckin' Racing' as though it's a normal race, ignoring potential smash up opportunities and heading for the finish line. I suppose it's just impossible to shake the old ideas of first one across the line wins.

How many tracks are there in DD2?

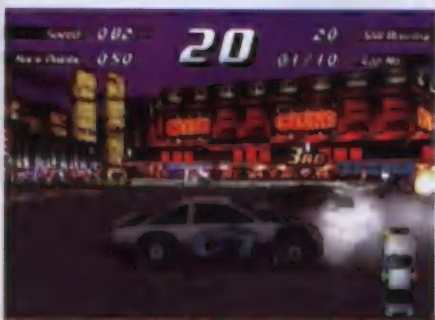
There are seven racing tracks and four new Destruction Derby bowls too.

What sort of features exist and are there any crossover tracks in the new game?

Yes. There are, but the track in question actually has multiple crossovers and some other features, such as the squeeze areas have remained. Aside from the additional stuff already mentioned like banks, jumps etc, other new features include tunnels, twisting jumps which can send the car into a barrel roll, extreme hills and on some tracks the player has a choice of routes to take. Some scenery features have been updated too – remember Wild Bill, the auto salesman advert from DD1? – he's now a full

New features in this new and improved version of your favourite stock car game include cars flying into the air after impact (right), full-on 20 car collisions in the four Destruction Derby bowls (bottom left), plus a couple of new visual features such as smoke, breakable bonnets, exploding cars and exposed engines (bottom right)





No more are you stuck to the confines of the race track! Race around a city centre if you like

3D Gouraud Shaded model complete with 3D cigar and smoke!

What are you most pleased with in the game?

Well, sequels often seem to be 'same game with new tracks' and a couple of extra options. The thing we are most pleased with in DD2 is that every aspect of the programming has been re-designed or overhauled. In some ways this has also been quite frustrating. For example, the routines for displaying the track took a long time to re-write and optimise, but the end result appears to be the same – the track is displayed, even though it may look better – but it's much more satisfying when weeks of work result in something completely new.

How did you ensure that all the crash effects 'felt' right?

I'd like to say that we actually rolled a few of the staff's cars to ensure that we had got the effect just right! Unfortunately, the programmers insisted on using simplified impact dynamics between 3D cubes.

Never mind, there's always DD3. So apart from totalling contents of the staff car park, how much extra research was involved in DD2?

During the research for DD1, we'd already visited around 60 races in Britain, so there was little else we could do here. So the main addition was to visit some of the American tracks in an attempt to glamourise the racing a little. Real stock car and destruction derby races tend to take place on muddy fields or small local tracks and we wanted to give the game more of a Daytona 500 world stage appeal. One interesting point is that banger racing and destruction derbies are actually less exciting in America since they seem to be bogged down with rules and regulations, whereas in Britain there don't seem to be any rules to follow! Actually some



"I'd like to say that we actually rolled a few of the staff's cars to ensure that we had got the crash effects just right, unfortunately the programmers insisted on using simplified impact dynamics between 3D cubes"

Martin Edmundson – Reflections

of the safety rules seem quite strange – in Britain, all glass must be removed from the cars, and the windscreen replaced with a grill, for obvious reasons, but in the races I visited in America, the front windscreen must be left in place to 'protect drivers from flying debris' – like glass! Bizarre!

Still no split screen option. Why the hell not?

Because it'd be impossible for us to implement in DD2. A split screen has to calculate the screen scene twice (one for each player) and then display twice as many polygons since there are two possible views simultaneously. Obviously since the screens are half height, the polygons will be smaller or clipped, but this never makes up for the overhead of the two views. Also due to the detail in the tracks, we uncompress them from Ram in real time – a split screen would need twice the workspace for this and run twice as slow. Some games like Sega Rally have simplified their visuals on split screen, but in DD2 due to the denting, we need our polygons. The result would be a very slow, jerky game and we doubt that there would be enough memory anyhow.

Let's move onto the audio. What sort of music and effects have been used this time?

We've ditched the typical techno style this time in favour of something more appropriate to the destructive style of racing – metal! Last year we had plenty of sound left over from DD1. Originally we strapped a DAT recorder into a stock car, but most

of the useful sounds were covered by swearing! So obviously, we couldn't use those.

What about the new commentator?

DD1 used an English voice actor who tried to mimic the American style of commentary. For DD2 we went over to Indianapolis and used a guy called Paul Page. He commentates on the Indy 500 and Daytona 500 for NBC Sports in a typically enthusiastic way. We gave him a script and he read from that, but to be honest the more useful footage was when he made stuff up himself. He sat in front of the microphone and imagined a race with his eyes closed. He was in full flow and got quite carried away with the excitement of his imaginary race, so much so that he sounds just like an American equivalent of Murray Walker!

To what extent is DD2 a second generation game?

Although Destruction Derby 2 is a racing game, and there were a few first generation games that were racing games, we feel that taking the game into true 3D with rolls and flips we have transformed it, making DD1 feel quite primitive by comparison.

Finally, any thoughts on what will be the next step in racing games?

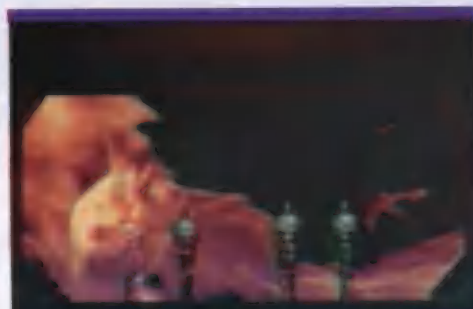
Now that would be giving away secrets!

Cheers Martin, let's hope that DD2 makes the grade when we get it in for review in our very next issue. Watch this space to find out the final result.

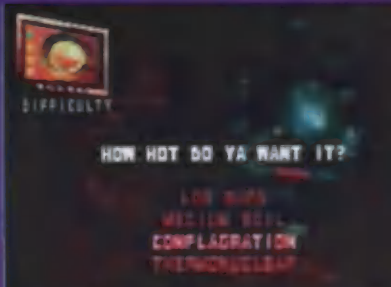
Game Title **Blast Chamber**

Software House **Activision**

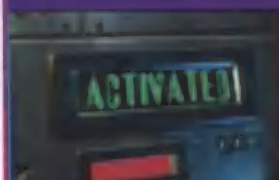
Similar in some ways to the forthcoming Pitball and R



Undoubtedly the most enjoyment gleaned out of Blast Chamber will be when four friends get together for a game. There's no guarantee you'll still be friends by the end of it, but even if not, you'll have 'had a blast', so to speak, in the process. If you invest in this you may as well get a multi tap as well because, unless you're totally friendless, people will be hammering on your door in no time



Blast Chamber is pencilled in for a Christmas release, and if that date is met, Activision could do well out of this, simply because there's nothing else like it around at the moment. Fans of games like Super Bomberman on the Super Nintendo will hold this close to their hearts, even though it may lack the cutesy appeal of that old favourite

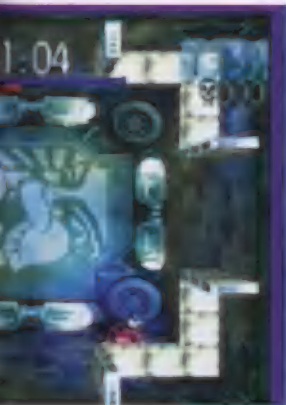


The combative arenas are very varied and manage to keep fresh what is essentially the same game every time by throwing in new obstacles and layouts. Each has a suitably different look and feel to it - although most are futuristic in style - but, more important, each forces you to vary playing style and tactics, and you must adapt quickly to each new environment

Blast Chamber gives you the tough choice, kill or be killed. Which will you go for?



At first Blast Chamber seems ridiculously confusing. As the frustration mounts it appears impossible to get anywhere and you seem to end up spending more time chasing than in possession. But this is when you realise how tactically diverse the game actually is. To get anywhere you're going to need to think on your feet. And think fast



The environments are fully animated and each character will have a variety of realistic, ultra responsive, athletic moves to perform to keep the action fast and frantic. There are plenty of amusing little touches – like the smoke trails from your character's pants as he nears the end of the timer on the bomb strapped to his person. At this stage it seems as though it will be difficult not to like Blast Chamber

It's a Megablast!

By Steve McNally

Unless you've actually played it, the ideas behind Blast Chamber are difficult to understand. It's a very complicated and long process trying to explain the mechanics to the uninitiated, so bear with me.

It is set in a rotatable 3D cube and allows up to four players to challenge each other in a pressure-packed race against time. The idea is to stay one step ahead of your aggressive opponents as they manoeuvre their character through an intricate maze of obstacles, obtain control of a powerful, pulsing crystal and place it into the appropriate transmitter before a deadly time bomb strapped to their body is triggered.

Using a great deal of speed, dexterity and concentration, you must run up stairs, jump across catwalks and swing from ropes trying to retrieve the crystal and keep it away from your equally eager opponents.

You are challenged to avoid traps and strategically rotate the cube in order to maintain control of the crystal and keep opponents off guard.

As with all good multiplayer games Blast Chamber can be configured in just about as many different ways you can think of to suit all players, but just as much importance has been placed on the one-player mode. Activision is keen to ensure this is up to scratch as well and has done a very good job of maintaining the interest level of the solo player as well.

In single-player mode you can compete in up to 40 different, complex room designs compared to approximately 20 in multi-player mode. This not only gives a long lasting and enjoyable challenge, but also provides an incentive for hardened multi-player gamers to have a crack on their own as well – something which many products simply don't offer.

In puzzle/strategy games, quite often the appearance is neglected – as in Worms – and, although Team 17's classic proved that, if the gameplay is good enough many people will not be too concerned with that, Activision has succeeded in making the game as pleasing to the eye as it is to the mind.

Release Date: Christmas '96

Game Title **Disruptor**

Software House **Interplay**

Everybody who's anybody is jumping on the Doom bandwagon

Guns 'n' robots

By Andy Sharp

SPACE IS, APPARENTLY, THE FINAL FRONTIER, so at some stage in the future it seems possible that mankind may well find a handful of inhabitable areas out there in the universe. This is where *Disruptor* comes in. The settlements established in space are being threatened by numerous mutants, renegades and terrorists. You are a part of the elite United Earth Lightstormer troops. This must be a cross between the SAS, the Marines and the Foreign Legion, with a touch of Gurkha thrown in for good measure. Either way you're part of some elite army troop and yes, you've guessed it, you're one tough mother.

The job of a Lightstormer is never done and there will be many battles to be fought before the settlements under your protection become safe from enemy threat again.

When all is said and done, however, *Disruptor* looks like being yet another in the first-person perspective shoot'em-up stakes. This is no bad thing, as the PlayStation has proved itself to be more than capable of handling any game of this type.

There are also a large number of other similar games on the horizon, such as *Horned Owl* (a massive hit in Japan) and Psygnosis' *Tenka*.

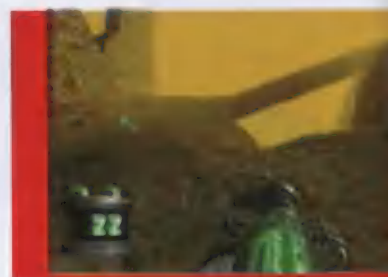
The competition is certainly hot, with *Doom*, *Alien Trilogy* and now *Final Doom* being some of the best PlayStation releases to date. As with any game of this type you will be able to collect some impressive weapons to add to your arsenal in the form of Anti-Matter Blasters and the Lock-On Cannon.

These are just a couple of the nine weapons you will encounter on your quest. An addition which is incorporated into *Disruptor* which has been omitted from other similar games is the opportunity to use 'psionic' (rather than bionic) powers.

This supernatural gift allows the player to use the mind for healing, attacking enemies and draining energy from their bodies. This adds a whole new dimension to the proceedings, as it means you don't have to rely solely on firepower. Developed by Universal Interactive Studios, *Disruptor* looks as if it could be quite a success.

Release Date: Fourth Quarter '96

Each level contains over 20 enemies which use artificial intelligence. This results in some of them being more difficult to kill than others. As you progress further into the game itself the levels will become increasingly difficult to complete, as you would expect. Depending on the events on-screen, the soundtrack will change accordingly, which also adds to the overall atmosphere



There are 20 differing environments through which you must battle in 13 different levels. The good thing here is that the battle zones do change regularly so you don't become too complacent. From swamplands to space crafts, it's all included in here. When the final version is released it will also contain some live action video sequences which will reveal the plot in more detail and also act as a break from the continual blasting

with varying degrees of success. This time it's the turn of Interplay to hitch a ride

As with most of the 3D first-person shooters, the controls have been kept as simple as possible in a bid to make the whole thing so much more enjoyable. The only buttons you'll need are a fire button, psionic fire button and a jump button. You can also bring up a map and stroll around, although it's pretty pointless on the whole as enemies can't be seen. However, if it's a quick browse of your current position you're after, then it's damn handy



How Disruptor will stand in the Doom wars is yet to be seen, but on first impressions it's a worthy attempt with a little twist to make the story a little more interesting. The psionic powers will also help it stand apart from similar games of this ilk - this is an attempt to bring an element of 'thought' into the game, but when all is said and done, it seems to be little more than just another weapon, so whether the psionic powers make a difference or not is debatable



To date Interplay has been responsible for bringing Descent and Cyberia onto the PlayStation, with some degree of success. Other releases forthcoming from this stable are VR Pool, a conversion of the PC smash, and Wild Nines, an adventure/beat'em-up, amongst others. The planned film licence release of Waterworld has been scrapped, but the good news is that the totally revamped Rock 'N' Roll Racing 2 is still in the pipeline. They're pretty busy at Interplay you see, and will certainly be more prominent in the future as far as PlayStation releases are concerned

Game Titles **Swagman**, **Deathtrap Dungeon**, **Incredible Hulk**, **Tomb Raider**, **Ninja**

Software House **Eidos** Eidos, the driving force behind US Gold and Core Design, has five

The Eidos Five

By Alex Lee

Swagman

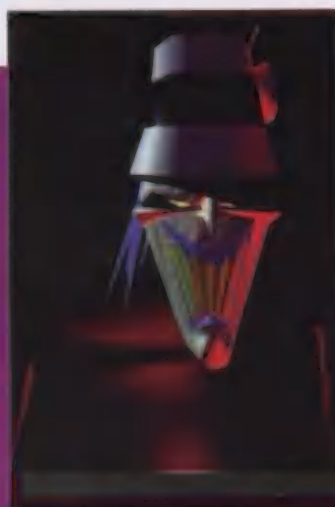
Core Design debuted on the PlayStation with two corking titles. Firestorm breathed new life into the hugely popular Thunderhawk series, whereas Shellshock took a similar idea, added a handful of streetwise, jive talking chaps, threw the whole lot into a massive tank and told them to destroy the neighbourhood. Both games received massive scores all across the board and Core Design is set to its assault on the PlayStation.

Core now has three new PlayStation offerings to urge you to part with even more cash over the coming months, the first one being Swagman. Those of you who thought they were experiencing a brief glimpse of heaven when Konami's excellent Zombies Ate My Neighbours title hit the SNES a couple of years back are in for a next generation treat later on this year. A magical puzzling adventure is in store for all of you PlayStation punters - it simply oozes the same addictive quality that made

Zombies such a hit all those years ago. Swagman boasts a 3D overhead gaming perspective and combines a massive sprawling 17 levels with hundreds of puzzles, battles and item relocation missions to give you numerous things to do while frantically trying to save your butt. It all sounds cool, but don't start rushing down to the shops demanding a copy, because it ain't coming out until next year.

Release Date: First quarter 1997

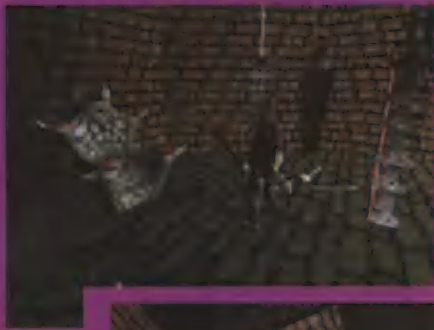
Swagman's two main characters are 8-year-old Zak and his twin sister Hannah, over which you have simultaneous control. When Zak and Hannah enter the Swagman's world, they change into powerful Dreambeasts with special abilities. Zak, Hannah and the weird and wonderful enemies they face on their travels are all fully 3D rendered sprites



Not only does Eidos have control over US Gold and Core Design, it also overlooks everything Sierra (a prominent PC software company) does and has recently purchased 30% worth of shares in Tigon - formerly known as Keygames - the development team responsible for Electronic Arts' commendable Doom-perspective-with-strategy game, Space Hulk

titles due for PlayStation release over the next few months – let us share them with you

Information on in-game features that PlayStation Pro has been privy to is as follows: Full 3D gameplay, an atmospheric fully dynamic dungeon lighting system, 16 levels, 55 types of characters from dragons and orcs to mummies and zombies, a combat system featuring sword fighting, spell casting, blunderbusses and close quarters combat, traps including covered pits, hidden corridors, false floors and moving spikes



Deathtrap Dungeon

Deathtrap Dungeon is Eidos' incredible new 3D action adventure epic based on the multi-million selling Fighting Fantasy books by Ian Livingstone. The two principles the team has held during the development of Deathtrap Dungeon are fun and simplicity. The combat system is fast, furious and easy to use. Each level is modelled in full 3D, creating an atmospheric dungeon full of cunningly designed traps, orcs, zombies, huge dragons, giant spiders, warriors, priestesses, necromancers and mummies.

According to US Gold, 'This game sacrifices nothing in order to give the ultimate gaming and visual experience both as a single player or over a network.' Your fluidly animated character can be viewed from any angle by an 'intelligent camera' system as he meets his doom or fights for his life. Plunging down pits or being devoured by dragons the action will be captured automatically from the most dramatic and visual angle.

From the interface to the depths of the dungeon inspired gameplay, the control method is intuitive and responsive. There are no impediments to your involvement. With 3D animation by Glassworks and video compression by Eidos, Deathtrap Dungeon is state of the art in every respect. This is a product with an impeccable pedigree and could become an industry benchmark.

US Gold is flagging it as 'The ultimate 3D dungeon experience.' The result is a combination of fast moving action, challenging hazards and bloodletting arcade combat. Has the ultimate dungeon been built? Find out in our January issue.

Release Date: First quarter 1997

Incredible Hulk THE PANTHEON SAGA

Two and a half years ago saw US Gold acquire the Hulk licence for the SNES and now the green superhero is about to double his bits from 16 to 32 and appear on the PlayStation.

The SNES version was a linear platform/beat'em-up in which Dr Bruce Banner – or David Banner, if you preferred the TV show to the Marvel magazines – relied on picking up gamma energy to keep himself green. The Hulk was capable of performing the odd special move such as the sonic clap and the spinning lariat and both have been rejigged for Incredible Hulk – The Pantheon Saga (IHPS).

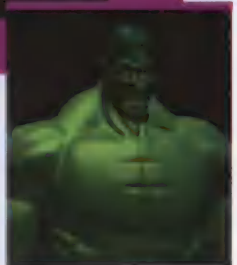
Marvel comic licences have always attracted attention among gamers, but so far on the PlayStation it's been a case of 'Why are we waiting?' Titles such as Ironman/XO Manowar In Heavy Metal, X-Men Children Of The Atom, Marvel 2099 and Marvel Superheroes have been wafted in front of our noses but without a sniff of an official British release for any of them.

IHPS, therefore, may just get there first and sate the appetites of Marvel comic fans all over Blighty. Using a similar view angle to games such as Loaded, Syndicate Wars and Zombies Ate My Neighbours (SNES), IHPS is a search and destroy job with a small puzzle solving element. The immediately noticeable thing about the Hulk sprite is his tiny head. The reason for this, apparently, is because his appearance has been re-modelled in the comics and this change reflects it.

Unlike the SNES Hulk game, however, the Hulk never transforms into Banner – it's just a case of decking enemies, picking up the energy they leave behind and also loading up on gamma energy from the icons littered around the play area. The puzzle element is more or less limited to shoving and throwing boxes around and punching the odd switch.

Five large, distinct levels are up for play, ranging from lab malarkey to floating around on a moving ice floe. Ultimately, after having scrapped with Pantheon foes such as Hector, Ulysses and X-Ray Hulk must face the Maestro – his evil alter-ego of the

Everything augurs well for the future.
Release Date: First quarter 1997



Tomb Raider

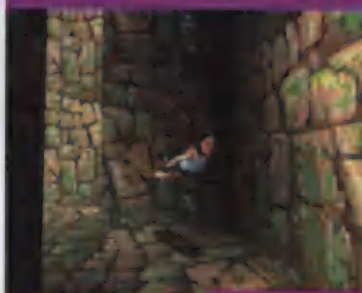
In Tomb Raider, a third-person perspective blaster, you jump into the shoes of a butt-kicking female Indiana Jones – Lara Croft – as she travels the globe in search of the ancient artefact known as the Scion. Cinematic camera changes swinging around the 3D world make viewing the action a treat, whereas frantic shooting action and loads of blood thirsty enemies provide the trigger happy fun. Think of it like Resident Evil in a pyramid and you're halfway there. The four levels will each be linked by FMV cut sequences.

Levels one to three require you to retrieve the three pieces of the Scion. Level four is the Pyramid of Atlantis. Each level is split into several zones. As you progress, extra weapons and power ups can be picked up and used. The in-game locations are as follows: Level one – Vilcabamba, The lost Incan city, supposedly the last stronghold of the Incas against the Spanish. This simple level gives you a chance to get used to the character and the feel of the game, providing more atmosphere than non-stop action. Therefore, only a few adversaries have been placed in this level. Level two is a Greek/Roman-style labyrinth, mixing legends of the Odyssey and Iliad in a jungle setting.

Level three is an Egyptian-style two-zoner built on the remains of an Atlantean storage facility. Level four's Atlantean Pyramid is initially deactivated and spooky with nothing going on. Then the pyramid is activated by Natla and all hell breaks loose.

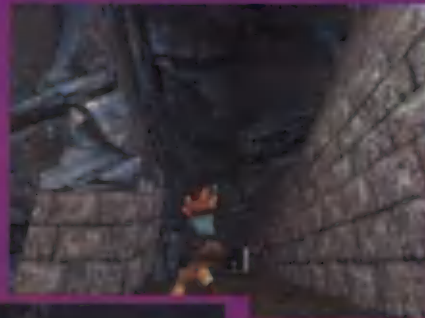
Once the control centre is destroyed, Lara must escape as the Pyramid is blowing up around her.

Release Date: December



its puzzles are inspired by Ultima Underworld/Doom/Dungeon Master and a million other games, but Core insists that original implementation is what counts. As for fighting, there is no game that has had a system even remotely similar to that of Tomb Raider. The closest thing it can be likened to is a 'John Woo' fight scene

Tomb Raider is a 3D action shoot-em up adventure with a twist. The action is not first person but third. You control a character moving and interacting with a real time 3D environment. In manoeuvrability it plays like Prince of Persia, except that Lara is far more versatile than the Prince ever was



Ninja

This one fits nicely into the isometric beat'em-up genre, but the aim of the game isn't simply pummelling your opponent over a best-of-three fist throwing bouts. Far from it, You are Kuwosawa, a young agile ninja who has bizarrely found himself deep in the middle of life-threatening battle against the dark forces of evil.

Mysterious lands await as you venture off into a strange world stoked full of demons, black magic, sword-wielding samurai nutters and the chance to pick up magical information and learn over 50 fighting moves to help in your bid for peace. This one's way off – it's scheduled for a March release – but rest assured that we'll deliver the goods when it's finally ready for public PlayStation consumption.

Release Date: March 1997

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

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
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☐ **ISSUE No.** ☐ **PS7(12)**

Game Titles **Mechwarrior 2, Pitball, Power Move Pro Wrestling**

Software House **Activision** Activision's software range is well respected on the PC and

Wrestling on mechanical vines

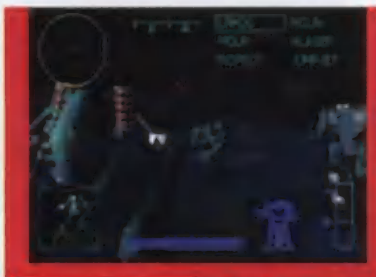
By Alex Lee

MechWarrior 2

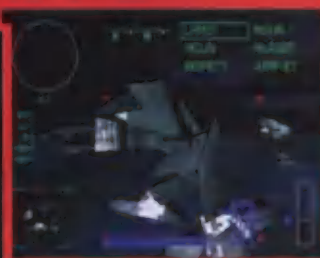
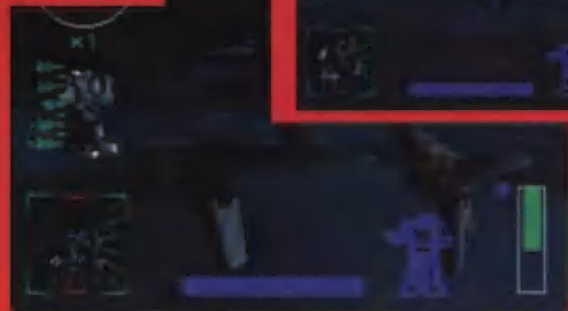
MechWarrior was a huge hit on PC-CD Rom, selling in excess of 600,000 units worldwide. MechWarrior 2 gives PlayStation gamers for the first time the chance to experience FASA's incredible Battletech universe when it hits the video game stores in February. Gamers will be faced with the choice of more than a dozen BattleMechs, complete with lasers, rockets and a host of other weapons of destruction. There will be 32 different missions to tackle within a fully texture-mapped environment.

Each BattleMech boasts an increased frame rate, and every shot fired results in a spectacular lighting effect. New power-ups, such as invisibility, unlimited ammo and repairs, will set a new standard for what is already an accomplished and respected series of games. Two different career modes are selectable – Wolf Clan or Jade Falcon Clan – to extend longevity and game variation.

Release Date: February 1997



The first MechWarrior game for the PC and 16-bit formats went down a treat. An excellent combination of strategy and shoot'em-up, there was enough action to keep the ardent bloodfest addict happy alongside those who prefer to go deeper into the technical side of things

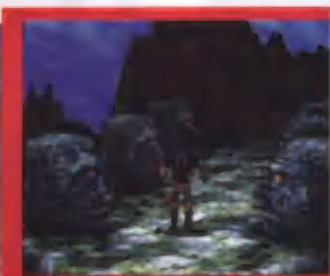
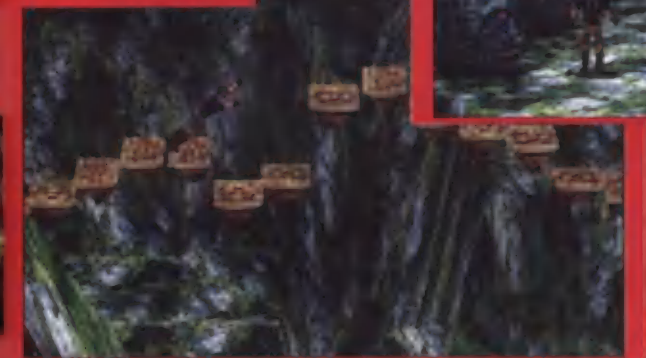


MechWarrior 2 (along with Hyperblade – a futuristic ice hockey style number which won't be on the PlayStation for a good few months) uses Microsoft's Direct 3D technology. Activision reckons this will provide gamers with 'an unparalleled immersive experience'

16-bit formats – here's the evidence to suggest it may fare as well on the PlayStation



Activision intends to set new industry standards by offering unequalled real-time 3D gameplay. The latest version of this blockbusting computer game series features detailed polygonal characters set within 15 non-linear worlds



Pitfall

Pitfall, not scheduled for release until March, is not that far advanced from the drawing board stage at the time of writing. With another entry in a series of games that have graced the PC and 16-bits, Activision is working on a true texture mapped 3D environment in which the hero of the piece can walk, run and vine swing to his heart's content.

Bizarrely, there's to be side-scrolling and fighting in 3D as well as 'intelligent camera technology' where the camera follows Harry from a third-person perspective so you can view the action from all sorts of angles. To complement the in-game thrills, there's an intense feature film-quality soundtrack. With a range of weapons including a war hammer, a battle axe (Harry's mother-in-law?) and an elemental sabre, Harry's looking forward to putting his life in your hands next summer. At least, he would be were he real.

Release Date: March 1997

In Pitfall, PlayStation-style, you take control of ace explorer Pitfall Harry deep in the South American jungle as he investigates the remnants of an ancient civilisation, the Indiana Jones way. Run, jump, battle and swing through a universe packed with puzzles, tricks and traps or die

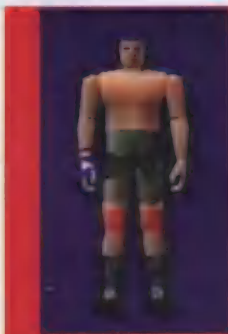
Power Move Pro Wrestling

Power Move Pro Wrestling is set to make its debut in Britain (and the rest of the western PlayStation world) in December. Activision is confident that this westernised version of last year's Japanese release Toukon Retsuden (TR) will be a big hit among the Western PlayStation civilisation after TR shipped 250,000 units in the land of the rising sun.

You may climb through the ropes of any one of four professional wrestling arenas and perform in front of loud, baying audiences. A professional voice actor provides the booming announcements. Efforts have been made to create a life-like professional wrestling game, so a responsive control method has been set up to pull off the right moves at the right time. Realism is one of the main qualities that Activision hopes to portray, so the moves aren't 'special', they're just good, old-fashioned beltors such as reversals, pile drivers, bodyslams, neck-breakers and rolling uppercuts. Take your pick from 12 fictitious wrestlers who breathe heavier the longer the bout goes on this Christmas. Reviewed next month.

Release Date: December

Although none of the characters in Power Move Pro Wrestling is based on real wrestlers, it seems only fair to mention some all-time wrestling heroes. Remember mask-wearing Kendo Nagasaki, overweight old bloke (christened Shirley) Big Daddy and grossly overweight hairy bloke Giant Haystacks? No? Not to worry, you haven't missed much



Although PlayStation Pro was lucky enough to see a completely playable version of Power Move Pro Wrestling, at the time of writing there are no in-game screenshots available. So you'll have to make do with these rather flat, uninspiring ones. Not that the game's flat and uninspiring, believe me. Not at all

Game Titles **Soviet Strike**, **Queen - The Eye**, **Privateer 2: The Darkening**, **NHL '97**, **NBA Live '97**
 Software House **Electronic Arts** Electronic Arts is one of the biggest names in games

Take it Easy

By Steve McNally

Soviet Strike

It was bound to happen. The Strike series was so phenomenally popular on the 16-bit formats that it was only a matter of time before it showed its face on the new consoles.

It's doing so in the form of Soviet Strike, which will feature a host of exciting new features and a compelling storyline that could easily be mirrored by today's headlines. Outstanding 3D photo-realistic landscapes form a dramatic backdrop and deliver the most realistic presentation in a Strike game to date.

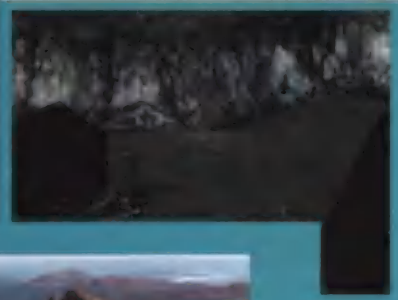
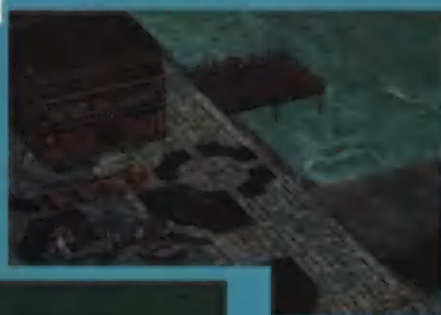
Soviet Strike takes its plot from the hypothetical collapse of the new-found democracy in the former Soviet Union. Your task will be to overthrow a dangerous Communist movement headed by a powerful ex-Soviet General known to the West only as The Shadowman. This dangerous adversary has the sole objective of returning his homeland to its former Soviet Union status by guiding democratic Russia into a disaster he has dubbed 'The Separatist Bloodbath'.

All this deep and meaningful current events stuff though, shouldn't cloud the issue that Soviet Strike will be all-out shooting action of the highest calibre. All that'll really change (hopefully) is that the graphics will be tarted up considerably but the game should remain essentially the same. After all, why change a winning formula?

Expected Release Date: Fourth Quarter '96



Strike is the name of an established underground task force which has been called upon to counteract threats for the purpose of preventing wars before they begin, by undertaking surgical strikes beyond the capabilities of the military. In this case the campaign is aimed at The Shadowman and his forces. You will assume the role of an elite helicopter pilot, hand picked to fight the cause of the movement



The landscapes have been designed to reflect the theme of each of the five levels - Crimea, Khyber, Black Sea, Dracula and Kremlin - and will create authentic environments in which you can hopefully truly suspend disbelief.

Added to this are multiple camera angles which should provide a feeling of total freedom as you play. In flight you can consult Strike.net - an onboard computer interface featuring state-of-the-art graphics and digitised voices



and its line up of new releases looks like doing nothing to harm that reputation

Queen – The Eye

I can't stand Queen, which is a shame really because this game, with over one and a half hours of original and remixed versions of many of Queen's best known tracks' as a backdrop, sounds quite promising.

With a cast of over 30 creative characters it offers to 'stimulate the eyes, ears and mind of the player', and I'm all for that. Set in the not-too-distant future events take place in a post apocalyptic era where the economies of the world have collapsed into a brutal global recession.

The last surviving remnants of urban society are governed by The Eye - a piece of self replicating biotechnology which strives to ensure that the very roots of creative thought and action are burned from the memory of humanity.

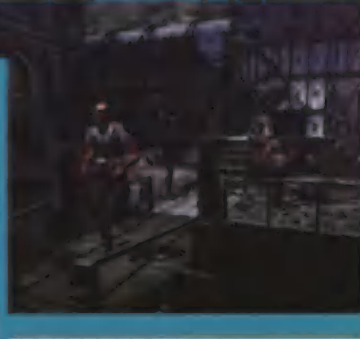
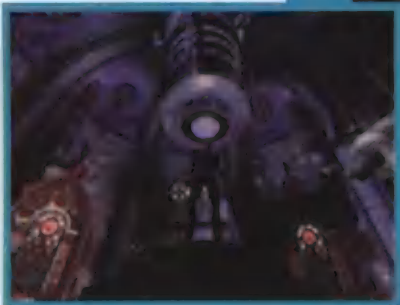
Sounds intriguing doesn't it? I hope I never have to play it though, but for all the wrong reasons I suppose.

Expected Release Date: Spring '97

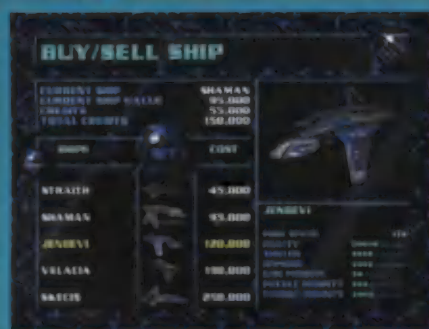


You take on the role of Dubroc (a blessing in itself, I was worried you might have to be Freddie Mercury for a minute), a hero in his own time who must overcome complex obstacles in each of five major domains while being stalked by the creature Death on Two Legs. Even better (sarcasm this by the way, sorry) is that the look of the game is apparently inspired by the 'visual imagery and iconography associated with key Queen albums'

Tim Massey of Destination Design reckons 'Queen - The Eye will be the first music game of its kind. The group has consistently lead the market in terms of innovation. It pioneered the music video industry with the classic Bohemian Rhapsody and has continued to set new milestones for the rock industry, along the way selling over 130 million albums'



This game is set in a futuristic universe comprising eight planets. You control the main character, Lev Arris, as he awakens from cryogenic storage. When he went to sleep he was suffering from a disease for which, at the time, there was no cure. Pulled from the wreckage of a ship and suffering from memory loss Lev must interact with many devils and sinister characters, some of whom are out to kill him



Privateer 2: The Darkening

The original Privateer game was, for many, a massive let down when it came out on the PC a couple of years back. Wing Commander 2 was riding the crest of a wave and it seemed like everything that Chris Roberts and development house Origin touched turned to gold. In principle it was a very good idea - in practice though, it just didn't come off.

The Darkening should be a completely different story. One of the most eagerly awaited games of the year, this is a state-of-the-art, space combat challenge featuring a cast of characters that just about everyone should recognise.

Star of the piece is Clive Owen who viewers of the BBC's Chancer will know immediately and he performs alongside Jurgen Prochnow (star of the fantastic Das Boot and not so fantastic Judge Dredd), and Christopher Walken (Pulp Fiction and The Deerhunter).

If you thought that was impressive, take a look at the supporting cast which includes John Hurt, Amanda Pays, Brian Blessed and David McCallum and you begin to get an idea of what an epic production this has turned out to be.

Expected Release Date: First Quarter '97

The Darkening offers three main areas of gameplay: space combat, trading and interaction through full motion video. The gameplay will feature some of the most sophisticated technology ever seen in a game of this genre. You'll be able to explore eight uniquely styled planets from a selection of 18 and there are over 20 space stations all set in a fully functioning universe

NHL '97

Electronic Arts' NHL Hockey series is perhaps the most celebrated re-creation of the sport so far, and unsurprisingly it's set to debut on the PlayStation before the end of the year. The 16-bit versions were quite similar in many ways to Sony's NHL Faceoff but hopefully you can expect the boundaries to be pushed back a long way with their first effort harnessing the undisputed power of 32-bit.

Expect to see improvements including the best use yet of the patented Virtual Stadium technology to provide cameras from any angle and all the action, razzmatazz and crowd participation of the real thing.

It also incorporates the first use of a new animation technique (to our knowledge at least) called Motion Blending which the developer reckons will provide the ultimate in smooth sports animation.

The leap in graphical quality has been achieved by incorporating all new player artwork and animations along with incredible skating, shooting and checking animations to make NHL Hockey more realistic than ever before.

There'll be the option to play an exhibition match or, for the more serious player, to take part in up to four simultaneous seasons incorporating trading players and injury crises plus new defensive and goalie artificial intelligence to make computer teams less predictable and more difficult to beat.

Expected Release Date: Late '96

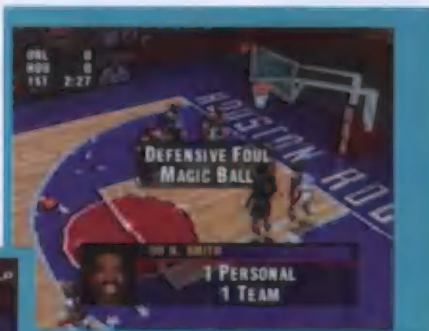
Motion Blending is most evident in the signature moves of the top players. This allows you to use the dazzling behind-the-back stickwork of Mario LeMieux



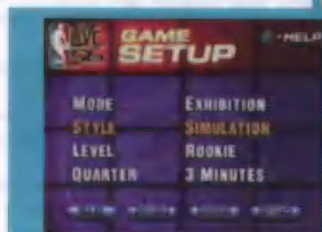
Even after these releases the EA Sports label is far from resting on its laurels. It's just announced at the recent European Computer Trade Show that the company has already tied up an exclusive licence for the 1998 World Cup to be held in France. This means we can expect to see a series of games leading up to the actual event as EA is guaranteed to make full use of such an expensive licensing deal



The game will contain all 29 NBA teams - including last year's new franchises, the Toronto Raptors and Vancouver Grizzlies - two All Star teams and four custom teams. Full rosters, custom players, on-the-fly play calling and competition style gameplay for up to eight should just about give this game the edge over its competitors



Three modes of play, including exhibition matches, a full season or even the playoffs are present. Basketball just wouldn't be the same without stats and NBA Live '97 certainly has its fair share



NBA Live '97

When NBA Live '96 came out on the PlayStation earlier this year it arrived at the time when there was a glut of basketball games all jostling for shelf space and all, without exception were more than worthy efforts. As a result though EA experienced something relatively new - it was somewhat overshadowed by its competitors and its game, for once, wasn't the best.

It's back again for '97 though and you can bet that the company has stepped up a gear to ensure it's competitive in a hopefully less heated marketplace this time around. New and exciting features include motion captured 3D polygon animation from real NBA players to guarantee the players' on screen movements are identical to their real life counterparts, smooth new camera angles, new music and an arena announcer to enhance the TV style presentation.

Perhaps most mouth watering for basketball fans though is the introduction of new 'one-on-one showtime moves' guaranteed to bring the crowd to its feet.

Expected Release Date: Early '97

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Game Titles **International Moto X**, **Trash It**

Software House **Warner** Preparing to release its next couple of games sometime before

Trash and Burn

By Andy Sharp



Int. Moto X uses the tried and tested formula of racing for points after which prize money is awarded to upgrade and repair your bike for the following race. The more successful you are in a race the more cash you're awarded for these bonuses. It's an option which rarely fails to keep things interesting as you jostle for an extra point

International Moto X

International Moto X has been developed by Renegade and offers the opportunity to partake in some dirt biking to use lay-man's terms. Nobody to date has attempted to bring motorbikes and dirt on to the PlayStation and the only biking game to appear is the rather average Road Rash.

The game is set up as a championship which takes in over 30 tracks over four wildly different continents. Renegade has tried to incorporate a feeling of realism whereby if you rev too quickly the front wheel rises and if you brake too hard you will cause a wheel spin.

The terrains also change from muddy to dry to icy depending on where you are racing. This means having to set your bike's performance to cope with the terrain on which you're racing.

Release Date: November 1996



Before setting out you may customise your bike. Using a wide range of colours you can change everything from mud guards to boots. Altering gear ratios and tyres is where your knowledge of the game will come into its own to cater for different terrain conditions. This can only be learned by trial and error



When or if you complete the circuits provided, there's an option to create your own tracks in next to no time using the unique Moto X Track Editor. All these options combined with a link up for a two player game should make this a hit with racing game fans all over

the Christmas period, Time Warner proves it has a mixed bag of tricks for everyone



Rage Software has spent plenty of time ensuring there are more levels to keep you enthralled while they gradually increase in difficulty. Over 100 levels is ample for anyone if the truth be told. Also included are real-time camera tracking and CD quality stereo which should be the norm nowadays



Trash It

If biking isn't your poison you may wish to see more of Trash It. Being more of a puzzle game there's plenty to keep you occupied.

In brief you take on the role of Jack Hammer who is designated to protect the defenceless Timmies, a race so useless it couldn't fight its way out of a grandmothers' convention.

The Timmies are being trapped by the terribly evil Doctor Moonbeam who's obviously a '60s love child.

Doc Moonbeam has planted some concrete seeds from which buildings sprout and trap the useless Timmies in preparation for their capture.

You in turn must demolish these structures before they overwhelm the population. In total there are 30 grades of hammers you can attain and the more successful you are the more the Tonnage Counter will improve. At the end of the level you must clear up with your rubble vac. All this comes with some animations and cinematic sequences.

Who could ask for more?

Release Date: November 1996



The more Timmies you protect the more points you will receive. To complete a level in any puzzle game you generally have to pit yourself against the clock and clear it in the allocated time otherwise the game is well and truly over. The full review will follow in time for its release

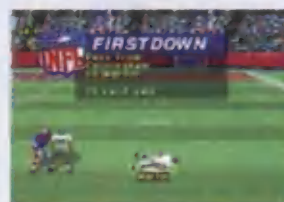


Ten ways to win at NFL Gameday

American football games are notoriously complicated. These ten tips should safely see you through an entire NFL season all the way to the Superbowl



CRUNCH.TIME Enter this code and whenever a tackle files in, there's a much higher chance of injury



THE CRUNCH! This player was actually tackled about ten yards from where he eventually landed



SET PLAYS Even when both teams are composed entirely of skeletons, set plays remain of vital importance

MINI REVIEW

There are three modes of play – preseason, play-offs and season. The preseason option is a single game for anyone who wants a quick blast in either one or two-player mode. The play-offs see you choosing a side and competing through the divisional championships with the Superbowl the ultimate aim

The control buttons are customisable, as are the weather conditions, game time, difficulty level and so on

Actually playing the game is remarkably simple. You choose each play using a combination of the D-pad and the four main buttons – one of which is a very handy reverse option allowing you to run every play in both directions

The players have all the moves you would expect – offensive players can do a short speed burst to break a tackle and they can spin and jump (to catch a pass or leap a tackle) or dive for the line

With NFL Gameday, Sony has set the standard for everyone else to beat. It's going to be difficult to knock this game off the top of the American football pile

I IMPROVE YOUR PLAYS

At the password prompt enter **OFFENSE** for a better offence and **DEFENSE** for a better defence. All codes on these two pages will only work if typed in upper case (**CAPITAL**) letters



SKELETON The option screen to try out all the codes. Skeleton brings back memories of Harryhausen

PLAY GAME Once your desired code has been input, go straight into a game to see the results

2 CODES AND WHAT THEY DO

SKELETON – Two Skeleton Teams playing in the Bone Bowl

CRUNCH.TIME – Hard hits and more injuries

BIG.BOYS – All your players grow to Refrigerator size

URNOTREDE – Computer



becomes difficult to beat
JUICE – Ten yard speed bursts
STICKUM – Receivers catch almost every pass
CANNON.ARM – Quarterback gets improved throwing arm
PICK.CITY – Easy interceptions





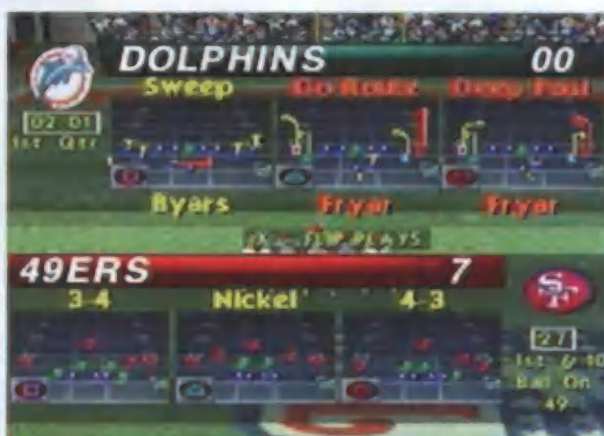
BIG. BOYS If the usual bunch of musclebound marauders aren't tough enough for you, input the password **BIG. BOYS** and enjoy a game between giants



THE KICK-OFF
Boot the ball as far as you can when kicking off, to put the pressure on the opposing side's defense and try and pin them in their own half.



DAN MARINO As the Dolphins' quarterback prepares to throw, O. J. McDuffie peels away up the wing to receive the pass time and time again



DOLPHIN WIN As stated in tip five, select the Go Route as your set play, keep Marino in the pocket for 4.5 seconds, then hit the square to release McDuffie.

3 GAIN MAJOR YARDAGE

The only play you need in the game is the following. Go into the 'Run & Shoot' menu, then go to the 'Quick Outs' play. Now, instead of throwing to the intended receiver, throw to the receiver that is assigned the triangle button. Make sure you stay in the pocket for a while and let him run his route. Once he starts making the break for the corner you're in! A twenty-plus yard gain nearly every time.

4 CREATE MAYHEM

As soon as the NFL Gameday logo appears, press - **R1, R1, L2, L1, TRI, CIR, SQ, L1, L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, TRI, TRI**. This will give you an option screen where you can select several strange things, such as #2 - Turn all players into John Madden, #7 - Touchdown Fatalities on and #9 - Turn opponents into rabbits.

5 DOLPHIN WIN

When using the Dolphins, Try the go route. Keep Marino in the pocket 4.5 seconds, then hit the square button to O. J. McDuffie. Works every time only with Marino to McDuffie. This will give you 1000 yards a game passing forever and a day!

6 NEW TEAMS

At the opening screen, press the following keys in order – **Circle, Circle, R1, R2, L1, L2, Circle, Square, Triangle**, then hold down **L1 and R1** simultaneously for about five seconds until the new teams appear

7 SNAKE SIDES

Enter the word SNAKE to reveal two serpentine teams, the Constrictors and the Vipers

8 24 YARD GAIN

Against computer you can pick single back, drive and throw to square when the receiver gets even with his defender. He makes a cut to the left before he catches it. You should gain at least 24 yards.

9 SOME MORE CODES

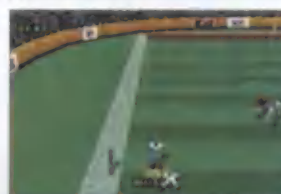
STERIODS
GOOD
FAIL
MAYHEM
BLITZ

10 IF ALL ELSE FAILS

Do a real life American Football tackle on your opponent, punch him, then 'accidentally' hit the reset button



MAKE IT HARD To hone your skills, choose two weak sides like these



IF ALL ELSE FAILS Repeat this manoeuvre in real life



CONTRIBUTORS

Mike Myers
Markus Monnig
Tommy E Culpepper
George
Alex

John Madden
Dan Marino
King Cobra
Jerry Becker
Halftime

Actua Golf

Masterclass



Hi, I'm Troy Weissmuller, and you may remember me

from other golfing manuals such as 'Chip & Putt: The Weissmuller Way', 'Reach That Green!' and 'You Take The Highway, I'll Take The Fairway'. I'm here today to make sure all you budding putt-meisters know your lobbing woods from your Hollywoods and your sand wedges from your warm bagels



MINI REVIEW

• An improvement on the PlayStation's other golfing outings, PGA Tour and Virtua Golf, for the simple reason that it's more playable in almost every aspect. The choice of angles is fantastic and the replay set-up is second to none, and additional extras such as dirt flying around when playing out of the rough and sand being kicked up when blasting from bunkers all add to the overall enjoyment

• No sports game nowadays seems complete without the addition of commentary from some well known pundit and Actua Golf is no exception, with the voice of golf, Peter Alliss proffering his opinions throughout the game. Alliss' commentary seems more natural, more realistic and altogether more in-time than most of the other sporting titles on offer and phrases such as 'This one's not for the faint hearted' and 'Just look at that swing - beautifully balanced' make playing a round of Actua Golf much more fun than having to listen to the incessant tweeting of birds (thankfully one sound effect Gremlin have seen fit to give a back seat to). The putting sections can be terribly suspect at times, but other than that Actua Golf is a winner in our book

Anyhow, here's a fabulous bunch of top golfing hints - direct from the pros at Gremlin UK - to give you the ongreen prowess of Arnold Palmer, the sophistication of Seve Ballesteros and the amusing anecdote back catalogue of Jimmy Tarbuck. Plus you'll also walk away with the ability to leave your friends frantically hacking hell out of the bunker while you're in the clubhouse with half a bitter and chicken-in-a-basket. Right, grab your caddy and away we go...



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT You'll find that spending time in practice mode helps your game incredibly



CLUB GUIDE

CLUB	MAXIMUM DISTANCE
Driver	300 yards
3 Wood	210 yards
5 Wood	180 yards
1 Iron	220 yards
2 Iron	210 yards
3 Iron	200 yards
4 Iron	190 yards
5 Iron	180 yards
6 Iron	170 yards
7 Iron	160 yards
8 Iron	150 yards
9 Iron	140 yards
Pitching Wedge	120 yards
Lobbing Wedge	110 yards
Sand Wedge	110 yards

Please note:

If you're playing in windy conditions use your irons instead of the woods. This will give your shots less loft and the wind will therefore have less effect on your ball. Use a Lobbing Wedge to put backspin on shots onto the green. This will make the ball stop dead, allowing you to place shots more accurately. Using fade and draw will affect the distance of your shots. Fade will decrease the distance and draw will cause the ball to travel further. So there. Get to it.



COURSE GUIDE

No. 1: River Valley Country Club

HOLE 1

The first hole at River Valley is a 445 yard par 4. It's a tough starting hole which dog legs from left to right around a wooded hillside. The hole requires a driver to find position, which ideally is left centre of the fairway. Any shot that is hit to the right off the tee will leave an impossible second shot. The green gently undulates but it is guarded by two large bunkers so a well struck iron is recommended to get onto it. However, any shot hit through the green can find trouble in the shape of a stream and some large bushes. The hole is well protected from the wind by steep wooded slopes and rarely becomes more than breezy until you reach the more exposed green.

HOLE 2

The second hole at River Valley is a straight 437 yard par 4, although it has two well placed fairway bunkers to the right and trees to the left ready to catch the unsuspecting golfer. The fairway also slopes from left to right, so a lay up shot with a fairway wood falling short of the two bunkers is recommended. There are also two greenside bunkers to the left and right which lie in wait for any wayward approach. The hole is very open to the wind which usually comes in off the sea to the left.

HOLE 3

The third hole is a 514 yard par 5 which offers a great chance for a birdie. This is a deceptive hole with a single bunker to the left of the fairway seemingly being its only defence. However, with its rolling, sloping, tree lined fairway it is easy to come across a difficult lie. The green is reachable in two shots, a tee shot needs to find the right half of the fairway to get a perfect angle for approaching the green. The green sits on a sloped rise and is protected by two bunkers either side of the fairway. The hole is quite sheltered from the prevailing wind in this shallow valley, although when the weather is blustery, this shelter proves less effective.

HOLE 4

This is a very challenging 194 yard par 3. The fairway is divided from the green by nearly 100 yards of water. The estuary offers

a strong psychological test to the player, but can easily be cleared when approached confidently. Any shot hit short will find a watery grave; anything long could find one of the green bunkers which would leave a very difficult shot back towards the water. The length of the hole calls for a solid strike with perhaps a long iron to find the green. The green itself lies in a bowl cut from the hill and is encircled by four bunkers. The wind on this hole blows from the right hand side down the narrow estuary valley.

HOLE 5

This fifth hole is a 434 yard par 4 and is the first of the coastal holes. The tee shot on this hole is the most difficult of the course as the narrow mouth of the estuary borders the fairway which curves left to the green. A straight drive is of the utmost importance, so as to avoid the beach and sea to the left of the fairway. Once on the fairway, a long iron or wood is needed to reach the green. Two bunkers guard the approach to the green – be wary of the occasional strong winds from the sea to the right.

HOLE 6

The sixth is a long par 4 which dog legs left part way down its 431 yards and is another hole which needs a good positional shot from the tee. With two deep fairway bunkers and a wooded area to the right, the left hand side of the fairway is the point to aim for from the tee shot. Although the wind is normally behind you on this hole, it is almost impossible to reach the two bunkers from a tee shot. When the wind is behind you, an approach shot to the green is made a little easier, but four bunkers await, catching anything hit left or right. The undulating green sitting above the fairway also makes it difficult to get close to the pin. Like hole 5, this one is very exposed to the sea breeze. As the fairway bends inland, the wind is normally behind you and can greatly increase the range of your clubs.

HOLE 7

This hole is a great 198 yard short par 3 and the last of the coastal holes. It is virtually surrounded by the beach, giving a feeling of playing in an oasis. It is important to hit the target. This is made more difficult by the fact that the green slopes downhill

from front to back. This is the most exposed hole on the course – the fairway sits on top of a plateau that protrudes into the sea. The wind drives towards the tee and can cause problems for those without the advantage of a good drive.

HOLE 8

This is a short 323 yard par 4 which at first glance gives the impression that a birdie is possible. However, the five natural bunkers right of the fairway formed from sand dunes await the unsuspecting golfer and any ball landing there will cause major problems. A tee shot with a fairway wood aimed slightly right and centre of the fairway should leave a relatively easy short pitch. This is a hole where either a birdie or a bogie are possible. The green is situated on a plateau backed by a steep wooded bank and any short shot will find its way into one of the greenside bunkers making it difficult to get the ball up and down for par. This hole is quite sheltered from the elements and any wind that prevails comes from behind the tee.

HOLE 9

This gentle 506 yard par 5 requires a long straight drive in order to yield a good score. With bunkers guarding the left and right side of the tree lined fairway and a prevailing left to right wind it is not an easy first shot to play. If the tee shot is played well then it ultimately becomes a birdie opportunity as the green can comfortably be reached in two shots. Standing as it does, high above the coast, hole 9 takes a battering from the wind from the left of the tee.

HOLE 10

This tenth hole being a 441 yard par 4 is a good start to the back nine holes. It climbs gently from the stream in front of the tee, to a ridge that hides a circle of bunkers halfway down the fairway and calls for a tight tee shot. The left hand traps are hidden by trees. A straight drive will leave a long iron or wood to a green that is protected by three bunkers. This hole is pretty much protected by the surrounding terrain, any wind usually blowing from the left.

HOLE 11

This par 4 dog leg hole curves 454 yards and offers a great challenge. The flat fairway is sep-

arated from the green with a large bunker sitting to the right at the very end of its length. The tee shot needs to be played with a touch of draw to get an ideal position right centre of the fairway. From the fairway, a long iron is required to carry over the stream which lies in front of the green. Three bunkers await any shot that is hit off line. The green itself is circled by three bunkers and backed by woodland and has a lot of slope. To go down in two when on the green is not the easiest of tasks. This hole gains cover due to its high location, quite removed from the windy elements. When the wind is strong it will drive up the fairway away from the tee.

HOLE 12

This hole is the shortest of the par 3 holes, being only 156 yards long. Although well guarded by water and bunkers, the green should prove a comfortable target to hit with only a 5 or 6 iron. The green is guarded by three bunkers and a stream divides it from the fairway. This combined with little humps and hollows, makes the positioning of the tee shot very important. This hole is well sheltered – the tee faces into any wind there may be.

HOLE 13

Here at the 13th, a 354 yard par 4, there is a very good opportunity to make a move score wise. Two bunkers on the narrow fairway can be quite easily avoided. Your best bet is to use a long iron from the tee to lay up, leaving a short to medium iron to the green avoiding the crescent shaped bunker directly in front. This hole faces the sea down a shallow valley, making any wind blow into the face of the player teeing off.

HOLE 14

This is a par 5, 562 yard beauty. Bunkers, which are evenly spaced down the fairway, can interfere with a shot from the tee, the second shot and any approach to the green. Care is needed all the way down this long hole. The tee shot ideally needs to be played with some fade in order to miss the first of the fairway bunkers. Once on the fairway another well struck wood favouring the latter right half of the fairway should be played. A medium to short iron should be used to approach the green which has a narrow entrance and is guarded by two ►

► deep bunkers, but is quite flat and receptive. All approaches should be played towards the rear. Trees lining the right side of the fairway do offer some degree of protection but this hole feels exposed and can get the full force of the sea wind from the right hand side.

HOLE 15

A coastal very tough 456 yard par 4. A long straight drive is essential and care must be taken to avoid the trees and four sunken bunkers that lie either side of the fairway. A long iron is necessary for the second shot in order to find the raised green which is also well guarded by bunkers. However, anything that is hit too well may find the stream lying behind the green. Stronger winds will sometimes gust from the left however. This hole is partly sheltered by the surrounding hills and trees.

HOLE 16

This one is as long as a par 3 gets. At 248 yards, with an avenue of trees to drive through and bunkers lying in wait to the left, right and centre of the narrow fairway, making a par 3 can seem quite a tall order. This hole has a large green which makes hitting the target a little easier, but it also has a bunker covering its front edge and is backed by woodland. The green also has a severe slope which makes putting very hard. This is a tough one. The hole's low position protects it from the stronger winds, those gusts that do find their way through come in from the left.



HOLE 17

The penultimate hole is a 395 yard par 4 and is one that offers a good chance for a birdie so long as the tee shot can find the fairway. The tee shot should be placed down the left hand side of the fairway and well away from the lake which would only be found with a badly taken shot. The green is positioned between two large bunkers but should be relatively easy to find for the competent golfer. Strong winds tend to blow from the right. With very little shelter this can be quite a handicap.

HOLE 18:

The final hole is a demanding 547 yard par 5. Not only is it lined with trees all of the way along the fairway, but it also follows a zig-zag path up the steep hillside which gradually rises to the green. The tee shot is probably the hardest of the hole. Finding the fairway is imperative as bunkers lurk to the left and right of it. The second shot is one of position with maybe a long iron or wood as reaching the green in two is impossible. The right half of the fairway is a good place to play the 3rd shot from and using a short iron shouldn't make the shot troublesome. If par is achieved using two shots on this green, which is raised and nestles between 3 bunkers, then this is commendable on what is a very, very difficult closing hole. Fortunately, the wind on this hole only affects the green and the tee which are more exposed than the rest of the hole.

Right, that's you sorted for the first course, now what about this other blighter?

No.2: Royal Glen Golf Club

HOLE 1:

The first hole here at this fine old Scottish links has a very generous fairway and a 386 yard par 4 – and it's not too long either. A driver off the tee starting left of



WIND IN THE WILLOWS Don't forget to keep an eye on the wind. Gusts can and will come from anywhere

centre should find its way into a good position from which to attack the pin. A short iron should be suitable to find the green, but anything short will roll away to the right, leaving you with an awkward chip. The green has quite a slope, therefore much care is needed when you're putting. Wind? Well, it's variable, but if it has a steady direction it is usually from the tee to the green.

HOLE 2

The second hole here at the Royal Glen is far from simple. This par 3, 224 yarder demands a well hit fairway wood or a long iron in order to reach the green. With three bunkers to the left, right and behind the green, accuracy is also very important. A par 3 will be hard earned on this one. By the way, the wind generally blows across the hole from the left.

HOLE 3

This 525 yard par 5 provides a good opportunity for a birdie. The hole snakes downhill kinking sharply between two bunkers, then onto the green which is also protected by two bunkers. A tee shot that just misses the pine trees on the left should travel downhill into a good position if it manages to avoid the well placed bunker on the right hand side of the fairway. From this position a good wood should just reach the green, but with bunkers to the front and rear of it any misjudgement could be costly. The wind here tends to blow from the tee to the green, enhancing shot length.

HOLE 4

The fourth hole is a 376 yard par 4. A good drive is essential to carry you over the stream which meanders across the fairway and cuts back to become a hazard at the right hand side of the green. There is also a fairway bunker which collects anything that's hit too far right. A medium iron will be required to find the green avoiding the two greenside traps.



NEXT LESSON Once you're fairly confident at River Valley you can move on to the Royal Glen courses

This is not a long hole but is probably the most difficult par 4 on the front nine. The wind usually blows across the hole from the right and when strong, it can make a long drive a rather difficult choice.

HOLE 5

The fifth hole is a ruddy tricky par 4. It's only 367 yards in length, but because of its vertical right angled dog leg, the hole is fraught with danger. Trouble comes in the form of three well placed bunkers and also a group of pine trees right on the corner of the dog leg. This renders it impossible to shorten the hole. A drive to the right hand side of the fairway is the best approach, leaving a long iron to the green. However, any second shot that goes left is in trouble, so a good straight iron shot is required. Two more bunkers cover the corner before the green, which stands on a plateau overlooking the stream. The wind normally blows in the face of any player at the tee.

HOLE 6

This one is a mentally challenging 222 yard par 3. The main obstacle is a lake created by the natural widening of the stream which is the dominant feature of the hole. The tee shot requires a long iron or fairway wood, and needs to be hit well. The green is on a slight plateau and any ball pitching short will roll down the slope and find a watery grave. With two shallow bunkers at the back of the green, anything long leaves a horrid second shot back towards the lake. The green is very receptive and flat, so there's no problem there. Find the green and par should be easy. The wind tends to blow from the right.

HOLE 7

Gulp. This one is a 412 yard par 4 with a stream running alongside to the right of the hole for its entire length. However, there is plenty of room on what is a fairly generous fairway. The best place to approach the green is from the



GO FOR THE PIN! Putting can be a top nightmare if you don't do it right. Just take your time and relax

right side of the fairway. After a good drive, the second shot is normally between 120 and 150 yards, so a birdie is quite possible. The green is one of the fastest on the course, so a good position on the approach is vital. Expect the wind to blow across the hole from the right.

HOLE 8

The 8th is an exciting 407 yard par 4 hole. The fairway slopes from right to left and is divided into two by a natural ridge. This gives the hole a two tier effect so the ball always runs with the slope. A smart play here is to hit the tee shot with a little fade to hold the ball into the slope and therefore make it finish on the left half of the fairway. This should avoid what is a very well placed bunker. From the fairway a medium to short iron is all that is required. The green is also a two tiered affair with two bunkers protecting it. So again the club selection for the second shot is very important. Anything hit onto the lower level of the green leaves an awkward first putt. Quite well sheltered from the elements, this hole at worst takes the occasional gust from the right.

HOLE 9

This hole is a short dog leg 318 yard par 4 which gives players two options. The first and most sensible option is to drive between the two fairway bunkers, to the corner of the dog leg, and play the second from there. This is usually nothing more than a short iron. However, the other option is more exciting. One can choose to take on the dog leg, hitting over a small bank or hill with gorse bushes and tree spread over it. If done successfully this leaves a short pitch and a birdie becomes very possible. But if the tee shot is not hit perfectly on this line bunkers, gorse bushes, trees and general trouble await. The green is pretty flat and is a very good surface to putt on. This hole is exposed to the elements and the wind will mostly blow strongly from the left.

HOLE 10

The tenth is a very good 199 yard par 3. The tee is elevated and very exposed to the wind which normally comes across the hole from left to right. A long iron is required and can make finding the green quite difficult. The green itself is set into a basin surrounded by three large



LET'S LOOK AT THAT AGAIN... After a thrilling hole, you can watch your handy work on the action replays

bunkers and banked by heavy woodland. It's quite an undulating green so once on the putting surface there is still a lot to do before making par. Watch out for the wind which sometimes hammers in from the left.

HOLE 11

From the tee, this 509 yard par 5 turns half left so a drawn shot should be favoured whilst trying to avoid the two bunkers placed on either side of the fairway. The second shot is fairly blind, played over a rise with another two bunkers craftily placed ahead on the right. However, after a good drive the one bunker green is reachable in two with a long iron or a fairway wood. As with most greens here at Royal Glen, the borrows on the green are quite tricky to read. In bad weather the wind blows down the hill towards the tee. So beware!

HOLE 12

The twelfth is yet another dog leg hole and probably the best looking hole on the course. With tall scotch pines and flowering gorse bushes lining both sides of the fairway it's an absolute picture. Playing the hole though is another matter. Two bunkers attract the attention from the tee and a further two await at greenside. Attempting to drive to the green will most certainly mean a sandy grave. The best policy is one of safety from the tee with a long iron or fairway wood positioning the ball between the fairway bunkers. This leaves a medium iron to the green. If the ball happens to go left and wide, then getting the ball up and down from there is almost impossible. The wind here can be quite changeable.

HOLE 13

The thirteenth is a 382 yard par 4 and presents a great birdie chance provided the fairway bunkers on the left and right from the tee are avoided. A shot of no more than 100 yards is left to a green which sits on a small copse. The wind here generally



OH BUNKER! Burying your ball isn't going to help your game one bit. Avoid the sand at all costs!

blows from behind the player on the tee.

HOLE 14

This is a very long 241 yard par 3 which sits in a depression where the valley opens out. There are two large bunkers in front of the green and a small pot bunker at the rear. The green is probably the largest on the course but with the stream almost surrounding the green the target can seem smaller than it actually is. Also with the depth of the green the club selection can vary from a 3 iron to a 3 wood. What little wind exists on this hole is generally changeable.

HOLE 15

This one is a 414 yard par 4 and has a slight dog leg from left to right. The hole sits on a wide plateau with the stream loosely centre of the fairway being marked by two bunkers. A driver from the tee to an ideal position of left centre on the fairway creates a good angle from which to approach the green. Two fairway bunkers can cause problems from the tee if the ball is hooked or sliced. The second shot is normally between 150 and 160 yards so a 6 or 7 iron will be needed to reach the putting surface which is guarded by another 3 bunkers. The wind here may gust from the left and can be hazardous on and around the green.

HOLE 16

This is a 421 yard par 4 which is not difficult if the fairway can be found from the tee. Climbing gently out of the valley between two thick stands of trees the hole narrows twice before reaching the wide green. A nasty pot bunker lurks on the left of the fairway and tall scotch pines line the right. Therefore a good tee shot is essential. After the tee shot the rest of the hole should be quite benign with only a medium to short iron being needed to reach the clover leaf shaped green. Heavy winds effect play from this hole driving strongly from left to right.



PANTS! It may be a joke at first, but dressing like a banana whilst on the fairway is golfing suicide

HOLE 17

The seventeenth is 154 yards and is the shortest of the par 3s on this course. At first glance it appears to be a simple little hole. However the tee is elevated and is also quite exposed to the wind so club selection can often be difficult. The green slopes awkwardly from front to back and from left to right and gives the appearance of an upturned saucer. As a consequence many tee shots roll off the green into one of the three greenside bunkers. On most occasions a medium iron is usually sufficient to find the putting surface. Birdies can be made here but bogies are also quite a common occurrence. This hole tends to be well sheltered from the wind although the tee is quite exposed and can be buffeted by strong winds from the left.

HOLE 18

The final hole here on this wonderful course is a gentle 511 yard par 5 that offers great reward if brave shots are attempted. The hole is a dog leg with three fairway and three greenside bunkers. The tee shot is very important. The best approach is to ignore the fairway which is to the right and drive over the little bank straight towards the green. This method will avoid two fairway bunkers leaving a long iron to the green. It's quite a large green and doesn't undulate too much so a birdie or even an eagle is a realistic possibility. The strong wind here blows with play and can be used to the players advantage. Make the most of it if you want to win.

There. I hope that helped. Next month I'll be handing you over to our resident self defence expert, Mad Kevin O'Blimey. He'll be taking a look at all the special techniques you need to become the ultimate fighter in Namco's newly released treat, Tekken 2 - just in case you've forgotten all the good bits and how the hell to perform them after a few 'scoops'. Until then, this is Troy signing off...

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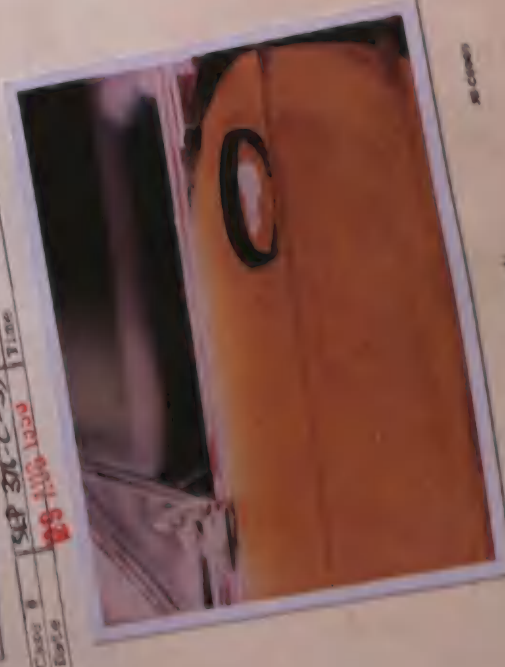
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ST. LOUIS HOSPITAL FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

PSYCHIATRIC COURT REPORT

ALL SECTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED

DATE 04-22-96 NAME LAQUIPE, PAI NUMBER 7924-60

RACE BLACK DOB 14.45 SEX MALE

ADULT ID 791134 APT/ROOM 0308014 AGE 19 HT 5'9" WT 190

COMPARTMENT NO. 46201 COURT ST. LOUIS COUNTY

SIGNATURE OF DOCTOR [Signature] APPROVAL [Signature]

CHARGE 1. VANDALISM

CONFIDENTIAL

1. VANDALISM

MR. LAQUIPE ADMITS PAINTING MOTHS' 2, FATHER'S AND EIGHTHORS' CAR WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION. HE TOLD THE POLICE THE CAR WAS TO BE PHOTOGRAPHIC REF NO. 679.

2. PECKLESS DRIVING

MR. LAQUIPE WAS STOPPED BY POLICE ON 03.13.96 AS HE PROCEEDED DOWN HIGHWAY 17. HE WAS DRIVING PECKLESSLY AND THROUING RUBBERHOES, ALONG LOCKS AND JEWELLERY BOLES FROM HIS CAR WINDOW.

MENTAL STATE EXAMINATION

MR. LAQUIPE WAS IN A HIGHLY EXCITABLE, MAJOR STATE. HE APPEARED TO HAVE LOST ALL TOUCH WITH REALITY AND BELIEVED HE WAS A CARTOON CHARACTER LIVING IN TOON TOWN. HE PRETENDED TO DRIVE AN INFLATABLE CAR BOYD THE POOL, SHOUTING THAT THE 'PECKLESS' WERE AFTER HIM. MR. LAQUIPE ACCUSED ME OF BEING 'MOTHS' AND PRESENTED ME WITH A CD OF "MOTHS' 2", A PLAYSTATION VIDEO GAME.

PLAYSTATION PRO RECOMMENDS

At the end of the day you only buy magazines so you don't waste your money on one of the many sub-standard games that are already available on the PlayStation. And this is the part of PlayStation Pro that's guaranteed to steer you in the right direction. Every game available in every genre has been assessed and placed in rank order so you know exactly what's the best example of each game style

RACING



1 F1 APPROVED

This just about comes out on top of a very tough category. As realistic as they come, this is as close as most of us will get to a Formula One car without having our personalities surgically removed first.

2 Motor Toon Grand Prix 2

Much more bizarre than many race games, this official release from Sony is just about unmatched in the sheer exhilaration stakes. Outrageous courses and a cast of comedy characters make this a winner in anyone's book.

3 Wipeout

Futuristic race game with the difficulty level turned right up to maximum. Fantastic graphics, speed and soundtrack plus an amazing feeling of satisfaction when you succeed make the extra bit of effort required well worthwhile.



4 Burning Road

This surprise offering from Funsoft shocked everyone by being better than the much-hyped Ridge Racer. It moves as fast as most of its competitors, looks a treat and even has an air freshener that swings about realistically when you go over a bump!

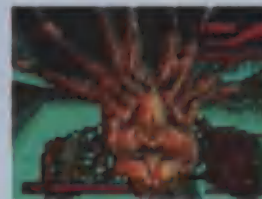


5 Destruction Derby

Released at the same time as the PlayStation itself in this country, Destruction Derby has stood the test of time surprisingly well. Still to be bettered by anything that's followed in terms of mass racing destruction, this is perhaps the ideal product for all you budding road hogs, joyriders or adrenaline junkies.

Also recommended
Ridge Racer Revolution
Need For Speed
Ridge Racer
Impact Racing
Andretti

SHOOT'EM-UP



1 Alien Trilogy APPROVED

Acclaim managed to out-Doom Doom and released Alien Trilogy to thunderous praise from just about every magazine around. One of the eeriest, most atmospheric games you'll ever play, and top of the sizeable shoot'em-up pile by quite some distance.



2 Doom

Still an all-time classic game, despite the somewhat dated graphics engine having been surpassed by other companies. As far as level construction and excitement go, it's still difficult to come close to beating ID's effort.

3 Shellshock

Core's stylish tank-based shoot'em-up scored well on just about all counts. Utilising the same superb game engine as the almost equally impressive Thunderhawk 2, Shellshock provides a long lasting and varied challenge.



4 Krazy Ivan

There's far more to this than cheesy FMV sequences. Krazy Ivan is an office favourite and out of the early batch of releases this one probably still gets more play than any of the others.

5 Loaded

Gremlin's take on '80s classic arcade game Gauntlet may be simplistic, but if you're looking for out and out excitement with little or no thought required, look no further. Real blood and thunder action in the best tradition of the shoot'em-up. With a couple of tracks provided by indie kings Pop Will Eat Itself it's an all-round success.

Also recommended
Viewpoint
Descent
Starfighter 3000
Klonek the Blood
Raiden Project

BEAT'EM-UP



1 Tekken 2 APPROVED

A bit predictable, admittedly, but there's no denying this game's addictive qualities, amazing graphics and just about perfect gameplay. The acid test is to get someone who hates fighting games, get them to play this for a bit and watch them be converted.

2 Tekken

Only Tekken 2 is better and, to be honest, nothing else really comes close. Namco's domination of this market is almost total, and you have to wonder, when you've got one of the Tekken games, why even bother with anything else?



3 Mortal Kombat III

If we had a goriest beat'em-up category this would head the list. A more traditional style of game with some distinctly untraditional special moves. Tearing heads off with your bare hands isn't uncommon in MKIII, so don't say you weren't warned!

4 Battle Arena Toshinden 2

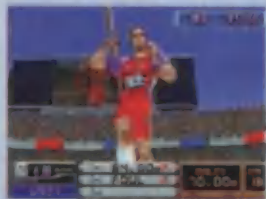
The pretender to the crown is basically a poor man's version of Tekken. Very similar to play, all Toshinden is lacking is a bit of spit and polish on the gameplay front. It's still great fun, however, if not the best in its genre.



5 WWF Wrestlemania

It's not sophisticated and it's not graphically advanced, but it's oozing gameplay out of just about every pore. Get a few friends round, load it up and you'll be clotheslining each other for hours on end. Get ready to rumble with the best of the best.

Also recommended
Zero Divide
Street Fighter Alpha
Rise 2: Resurrection
Criticom
Primal Rage



1 International Track & Field **APPROVED**

Possibly the most essential purchase to be released on the PlayStation so far. Fantastic multi-player fun, especially with the multi-tap, and an intriguing challenge for the solo player as you go all out for record times and distances.



2 Madden NFL '97

Without a doubt the best American Football game ever, on any gaming system. Stat levels are high but don't intrude on the excellent action that the game offers. Play it either seriously for a full season or just for a laugh in an exhibition game.

3 Olympic Soccer

It may not have the flashy motion capture of say, Actua Soccer, but US Gold's Olympic licence is certainly the easiest footy game to play and get to grips with. In no time at all you'll be scoring goals just like the pros.

4 NFL Gameday

Runs Madden NFL '97 a close second, and really shouldn't be discounted if you're looking to buy a game of this type. There's just about everything you could want in there and it's only second best due to poor presentation.



5 Total NBA '96

Sony shows everyone else how to do a basketball game with this stunning-looking recreation of five on five hoop action. It's not as instantly gratifying as Konami's NBA in the Zone, but does provide a more fulfilling, long lasting challenge.

Also recommended

NHL Faceoff
Actua Golf
Actua Soccer
Adidas Power Soccer
NBA in the Zone

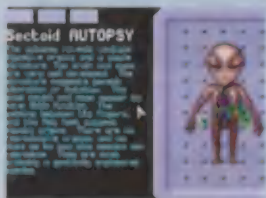


1 Worms **APPROVED**

This game does wonders for the reputation of this much maligned genre by proving that strategy games can be fun. Guide your team of hermaphrodites to ultimate victory using missiles, grenades and land mines!

2 Magic Carpet

Bullfrog's unique strategy shoot'em-up tops the pile at the moment, but even this isn't spectacularly good. However, it's still the best option for someone looking to utilise their planning skills by quite some distance.



3 X-Com

This perfect conversion of the phenomenally popular PC smash hit caught the imagination of PlayStation owners not through its looks, but through its compelling storyline and thoughtful yet tense and exciting brand of action.



4 Sim City 2000

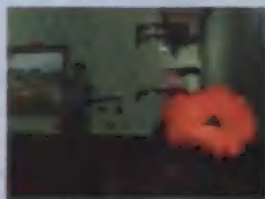
It'd be nice to see an original PlayStation strategy game, because so far all the best ones have been conversions from other formats. This is another, and once again it proves that this type of thing can be done on this machine, and be done well.

5 Space Hulk

As it's subtitled Vengeance of the Blood Angels, you'd think that this was far too exciting to come under the strategy banner. But it does, simply because if you don't employ a healthy dollop of thought and planning, you won't get very far. Not that there's no action. An old classic on other formats it's a healthy combination of the two and is highly recommended.

Also recommended

Theme Park
AIV Evolution Global
Panzer General



1 Resident Evil **APPROVED**

If an all-out gore fest is your type of thing, look no further than Capcom's incredible Resident Evil for your regular fix of zombie mayhem and puzzle solving. A genuinely enthralling adventure that you'll come back to time and again.

2 Fade to Black

The only fault any of us could find with Electronic Arts' French developed adventure was that it's possibly too hard for some inexperienced players. If you're man (or woman) enough to see it through, the rewards are well worthwhile.

3 Alone in the Dark:

Jack Is Back

In the mould of Resident Evil, but this isn't as good because it's a conversion of a PC game and doesn't make use of the PlayStation's technology as well as it should. A few niggles aside, it's got one of the best storylines around.

4 D

This is not for the faint hearted, or indeed anyone who likes to have some freedom of movement, because the beautiful graphics mean the programmers have had to restrict you to preset paths. Still worth a look, though.

Also recommended

Cyberia
Myst
Time Commando
Discworld
Psychic Detective

FLIGHT SIM

1 Gunship **APPROVED**

Simulation King MicroProse rightfully leads the field with this helicopter-based flight sim/strategy affair. It may not be the best-looking game on the PlayStation, but it is certainly one of the most gripping, and one of the most difficult.

2 Thunderhawk 2

Core has been the most consistent of the British publishers so far, and this run of form sees it get another high placing, this time for another game using that impressive 3D engine. Thunderhawk isn't technically as good as Gunship, but it's a little more exciting due to the all out blasting action from start to finish.

Also recommended

Top Gun
Air Combat
Warhawk



1 Rayman **APPROVED**

With the exception of this game, the standard of platformers is disappointingly poor at the moment. Plenty of people are busy trying to put this to rights, but for now Ubisoft's classic will fill the gap nicely thank you very much.

2 Jumping Flash 2

Great fun to play, but still a little too easy and not all that much of an improvement over the original, really. Easily wins the award for most bizarre platform game, but doesn't really offer the experienced player a great deal more than they've already seen.



3 Earthworm Jim

Another game that doesn't take full advantage of the PlayStation's power - you'd be hard pushed to spot the difference between this and the 16-bit versions. But that's not to say it's not a good game, because it is.

4 Gex

The wisecracking lizard may get on your nerves after a while, but you can turn him off. Underneath the dour-looking surface lies an above average platformer for you to sink your teeth into.

Also recommended

Johnny Bazzookatone
Mickey Mania
Jumping Flash
Cheesy
Floating Runner

PUZZLE

1 3D Lemmings

There aren't all that many puzzlers around, so although this isn't that great, it's still the best option for fans of more cerebral pursuits. It's certainly testing enough, not only because of the puzzles, but because the game is true 3D. Moving around can be a little confusing at times but with some practice can be mastered. It's definitely not for everyone however.

Also recommended

Bust A Move 2
Chessmaster 3D
Hebereke Poppolitto



1 Die Hard Trilogy **APPROVED**

It doesn't do Fox Interactive's debut justice to stick it here with the pinball games, but it genuinely doesn't fit into any one category. A perfect blend of shooting (both Virtua Cop and Fade to Black styles) and driving make this a brilliant game all round!

2 Pro Pinball

The best of the pinball offerings so far. Empire's effort can be justifiably criticised for only having one table, but when it looks as good as this, and is packed with so many features, it can be just about forgiven.

Also recommended

True Pinball
Extreme Pinball

RETRO



1 Namco Museum

Volume 1 **APPROVED**

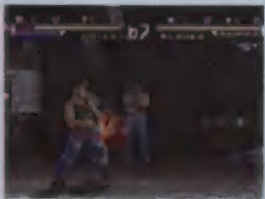
The better of the two Namco offerings so far, this one features some real classic arcade games. This retro stuff isn't to everyone's taste, but it does bring back some very happy memories for anyone old enough to remember these halcyon days of gaming.

Also recommended

Williams Arcade Greatest
Namco Museum Volume 2

GAMES TO AVOID

Aquasaut's Holiday
Extreme Pinball



Street Fighter: The Movie
Lone Soldier
Galaxian 3
Cyberspeed
Novastorm
Off World Interceptor
In the Hunt

Any import you haven't seen reviewed in PlayStation Pro as let's face it most of them really are rather drab affairs and are best avoided

Forthcoming attractions



The reviews are coming thick and fast in next month's

PlayStation Pro. **Soviet Strike** heralds the

PlayStation debut of EA's classic strategy/shoot'em-up series.

Virgin caters for 3D scrap enthusiasts with **Star Gladiator**,

while simultaneously releasing Street Fighter Alpha 2 so the 2D fight fans don't

feel left out. **Steel Harbinger** and

Warhammer, both from Mindscape, illustrate perfectly how a

software house can release two products both ending in 'er'



but still make them completely different. Interplay's Disruptor promises to give us

all special 'psionic' powers – without being pissed – whereas



Supersonic Racers, another

Mindscape game, is content with making us feel supersonic.

Ocean's eagerly awaited horizontal shoot'em-up X2 is finally reviewed next month

as is Konami's Project Overkill – another blaster but from an isometric perspec-

tive. Mortal Kombat Trilogy – three bloody beat'em-ups on a single CD and

Destruction Derby 2,

where Psygnosis shows off its big banana-like learning curve

are the biggest names of the month. Actually, that's a bit of a



mistake. The biggest name of the month, every month, is PlayStation Pro – written

by experts, read by winners.

PLAYSTATION *Issue 2 out*
PRO *November 17*

Also appearing next issue

Tomb Raider

Firo & Klawd

Pandemonium

Monster Trucks

NFL Game Day 97

Grid Run

Bubble Bobble 2

Floating Runner

Broken Sword

XCOM: Terror of the

Deep

Blazing Dragons

Destruction Derby 2

Crash Bandicoot

wipEout 2

Twisted Metal

Broken Helix

Lomax in Lemming Land

Chaos Control

Soul Edge

Dark Forces

Tenka

Tiger Shark

NFL Face Off

2Xtreme

Shining Sword

King's Field II

Ninja

Blast Chamber

Mech Warrior 2

Incredible Hulk

Pantheon Saga

As if that wasn't enough, there's the Central Station – the number one techno-phanzine for PlayStation culturalists everywhere – extensive guides, hints n tips, exhaustive news and the first letters page in PlayStation Pro's history written by experts, read by winners.

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Computer/Games Retailer ☐

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What attracted you to the magazine/why did you buy it?

Having read the magazine was
PlayStation Pro:

Much better than you expected ☐

Better than expected ☐

About the same as expected ☐

Not as good as expected ☐

Much worse than expected ☐

How do you rate the following sections of the mag?

In the boxes provided please rate on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being Liked Very Much and 5 being Disliked Very Much)

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Contents ☐

Reviews ☐

Previews ☐

News ☐

Tips/Players Guides ☐

Features ☐

Competitions ☐

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Design/Art ☐

Japanese Culture ☐

Readers speak-out ☐

Others/specify

What two things could be done to improve PlayStation Pro

1.

2.

What freebies would you be most interested in? Please highlight your favourite three in order of preference (1,2,3)

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Music CDs ☐

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Art Prints ☐

Would you say PlayStation Pro is value for money?

Yes ☐

Average ☐

No ☐

Will you buy PlayStation Pro again?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Would you be interested in subscribing to PlayStation Pro?

Yes ☐

No ☐

READERS' SURVEY

Hurry – only surveys received by 30 Nov '96 will be entered into the draw to win games or a year's subscription

Would you buy PlayStation Pro if it carried a CD, but was more expensive?

Yes ☐
No ☐

Which other PlayStation magazines do you regularly read? Please highlight your favourite three in order of preference (1,2,3)

C&VG ☐
Edge ☐
Games Master ☐
PlayStation Plus ☐
Play ☐
Total PlayStation ☐
Official PlayStation mag ☐
PlayStation Power ☐
PSX Pro ☐

What is your main reason for buying these particular magazines?

Choice 1 _____
Choice 2 _____
Choice 3 _____

How many PlayStation mags do you buy in an average month? _____

Having read PlayStation Pro will you:

Keep it for reference ☐
Throw it away ☐
Give it to a friend ☐

How many people read your copy of PlayStation Pro? _____

What other magazines do you buy in an average month?

Lifestyle ☐
Music ☐
Sports ☐

PlayStation related

How long have you had your PlayStation?

Since it came out ☐
6-8 months ☐

3-6 months ☐
1-3 months ☐
Less than a month ☐
Getting one this Christmas ☐

Did you (will you) buy it yourself or was it a present?

Bought it myself ☐
Present ☐

Which of the following do you own/intend to buy?

	Own	Intend to buy
Multitap	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Memory Card	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another Sony joypad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another unofficial joypad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link cable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many PlayStation games do you own? _____

How many do you intend to buy in the next 12 months? _____

How often do you buy games?

Monthly ☐
Bimonthly ☐
Quarterly ☐
Every 6 months ☐
Every 12 months ☐
Never ☐

What are your favourite games?

First person shoot'em up (e.g. Doom) ☐
Beat'em up (e.g. MK III) ☐
Shoot'em up (e.g. Raiden Project) ☐
Sports (e.g. Fifa 96) ☐
Driving (e.g. Ridge racer) ☐
Puzzle (e.g. Bust A Move) ☐
Strategy (e.g. XCom) ☐
Flight Sims (e.g. Gunship) ☐
Platform (e.g. Rayman) ☐
Obscure (e.g. Hebereke's Popoitto) ☐

How many hours a week do you spend play-

ing games?

On your own? ☐
With friends? ☐

What influences which game you buy? And how important are these?

In the boxes provided please rate on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being Very Important and 5 being Not Very Important)

Demo CD ☐
Free Book ☐
Posters/Postcards ☐
Magazine Review ☐
Magazine Preview ☐
World of mouth ☐
Adverts ☐
Other/specify: _____

Where do you buy your games from?

Mail order ☐
Game ☐
Electronic Boutique ☐
Virgin ☐
HMV ☐
Our Price ☐
Future Zone ☐
Toys R Us ☐
Woolworths ☐
Comet ☐
Argos ☐
Boots ☐
WH Smith ☐
Currys ☐
Tandy ☐
Exhibitions ☐
Local specialist shop ☐
Other (specify) _____

☐ please tick if you do not wish to receive any promotional literature

Now that you've completed the questionnaire send it (or a photocopy) to PlayStation Pro Survey, FREEPOST SK3038, Macclesfield, SK10 4YE (no stamp required in UK)
Or Fax results on: 01625 879 966

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	PLAYSTATION + EXTREME SPORTS plus one controller and playable demo CD	199.99	PLAYSTATION "INFERNO" PACK with hi-cap memory card, extra Saitek Megapad 11 controller, official controller and playable demo CD. Hi-cap memory card stores 8 times more data than standard cards	225.99	
	PLAYSTATION + RIDGE RACER plus one controller and playable demo CD	204.99	All PlayStations come with FREE delivery! A SCART lead is recommended for improved picture and sound from SCART TV's. RGB scart lead £9.99.		
	PLAYSTATION + TEKKEN plus one controller and playable demo CD	204.99	PLAYSTATION "FORMULA 1" plus one controller and playable demo CD	224.99	

PlayStation Games

• = NEW ITEM
xx% = REVIEW SCORE
(ANL) = FEATURES ANALOGUE CONTROL
(TAP) = MULTI-PLAYER VIA MULTI-TAP
(LINK) = MULTI-PLAYER VIA LINK CABLE
(PLG) = WILL WORK WITH PREDATOR GUN

00 TACKE TANK BLAST	37.95	EXTREME SPORTS
00 TACTICAL SHOOTER	47.95	FADE TO BLACK 10%
00 TRAIN	38.00	FIFA 87
00 ACTUA GOLF	34.95	FIFA SOCCER 90 (TAP)
00 ACTUA SOCCER 94%	36.00	FIND DOOM (LINK)
00 ACTUA POWER SOCCER 95% (TAP)	35.00	FIRO AND KLAWD
00 AIR COMBAT 81% (ANL)	35.00	FORMULA 1 94% (ANL) (LINK)
00 ARMED TRILOGY 95%	34.95	GEX 76%
00 ARCADE IN THE DARK 2 77%	31.99	GRID RUN *
00 ARCADE RACING	35.00	GUNSHIP 2 95% 95%
00 ARCADE'S HOLIDAY	31.99	HEXEN
00 ARCADE 3!	32.99	HYPERT MATCH TOUR TENNIS
00 ASSAULT RIG 81% (LINK)	35.00	ICE AND FIRE
00 AVYTON SENNA KARTING	31.99	IMPACT RACING
00 BALENALE	29.95	INCREDIBLE HULK - PANTHEON SAG
00 BATMAN FOREVER COIN-OP	35.99	INTL SUPERSTAR SOCCER DELUXE
00 BEDLAM	35.99	INTL TRACK & FIELD 82% (TAP)
00 BLACK DAWN *	34.99	JEWELS OF THE ORACLE *
00 BLACKHEAD	35.95	JERRY MAGDOEN 91 97
00 BLAZING DRAGONS	30.99	JERRY BAZOOKATORTS 88%
00 BLIMPPOINT	35.99	JONAH LOMU RUGBY *
00 BOMB SWORD	35.99	KILLING ZONE
00 BUBBLE BOBBLE 2	35.99	KONAMI KIDS (GOLF)
00 BUBBLE BOBBLE & RAINBOW ISLAND *	24.95	LEGACY OF KAIN *
00 BUST A MOVE 2 88%	33.49	LOADED 85%
00 CAUTION	33.99	LOMAX - RES IN LEMMING LAND *
00 CHEST	35.00	LONG SOLDIER 92%
00 CHRONICLES OF THE SWORD	35.99	MAGIC CARPET 90%
00 CLASH OF THE LOST CHILDREN	36.99	MAGIC THE GATHERING
00 CLASH BANDICOOT	35.99	MEGAMAN X3
00 CRIME WAVE	35.99	MIKEY'S WILD ADVENTURES
00 CROWD CITY OF ANGELS *	35.99	MICRO MACHINES 3
00 CROWD NO REMORSE	35.99	MORTAL COMBAT 3 84%
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00 DAVID COPPER	35.99	NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 1
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00 DESTRUCTION DERRY 81% (ANL)	35.99	NAMCO SOCCER PRIME GOAL
00 DESTRUCTION DERRY 81% (ANL)	35.99	NAMCO TENNIS WORLD COURT

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32.99	NHL HANGTIME	33.99	SWAGMAN	40.99
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32.99	NBA JAM EXTREME	34.99	TEKKEN 85%	34.99
34.99	NBA LIVE 97*	36.99	TEKKEN 2 *	39.99
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35.99	NFL GAME DAY	38.99	THEME HOSPITAL *	39.99
35.99	NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 97 80%	33.99	THEME PARK 86%	34.99
35.99	NHL 97 *	36.99	THUNDERPARKW 2 * FIRESTORM 86%	39.99
35.99	NHL FACE OFF	37.99	TILT	36.99
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35.99	RAIN PURSUIT	38.99	WING COMMANDER 3 80% *	36.99
33.99	RAYMAN 87*	37.99	WING COMMANDER 4 *	36.99
34.99	RESIDENT EVIL 88%	35.99	WIPFOUT 94% (ANL) (LINK)	39.99
34.99	RETURN FIRE 84%	35.49	WIPFOUT 200F (ANL) (LINK)	39.99
34.99	RODGE RACER 87 80% (ANL) *	35.99	WORMS 85%	29.99
34.99	RIDGE RACER 97 90% (ANL) (LINK)	34.99	X-COM TERROR UNKNOWN	24.99
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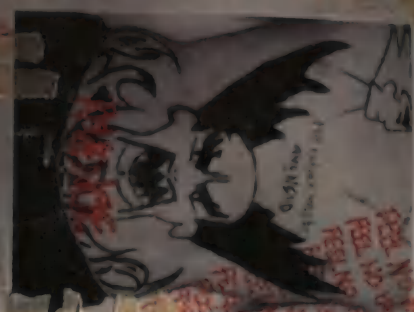
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OF PLATINUM



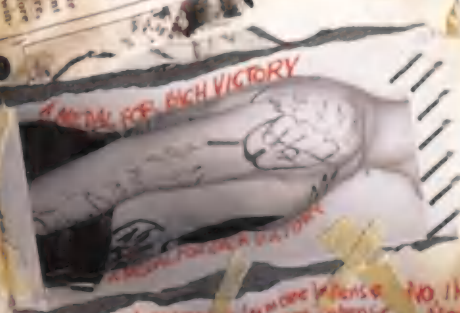
鐵華

THE SINGAPOREAN
ATTACK HAS LEFT ME SHOCKED
BUT I WILL CONTINUE THE
FIGHT - THE ONE OF
JUST CONTINUE,
THE FIGHT AGAIN
THE FIGHT AGAIN
THE FIGHT AGAIN

**POLICE
HUNT
TATTOOED
MANIAC**

A MATTER OF BUSINESS
THEY ARE
DANGEROUS.
TILL MAN, said to be in the West
the most easily treated store,
"It is a lot of good before
better than anything else with
supplies, and the first out of the
supplies."

The store manager said that he
had been playing Takashi
man station, when he could
play to the soldier - the man
suffered from a severe
illness, and he was
The police have been
an appropriate

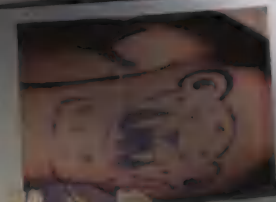
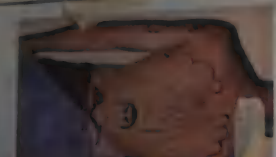


HEI-HACHI WITH AVENGES

HEI HACH! WILL AVENGE!
HEI HACH! WILL AVENGE!
HEI HACH! WILL AVENGE!
HEI HACH! WILL AVENGE!
HEI HACH! WILL AVENGE!



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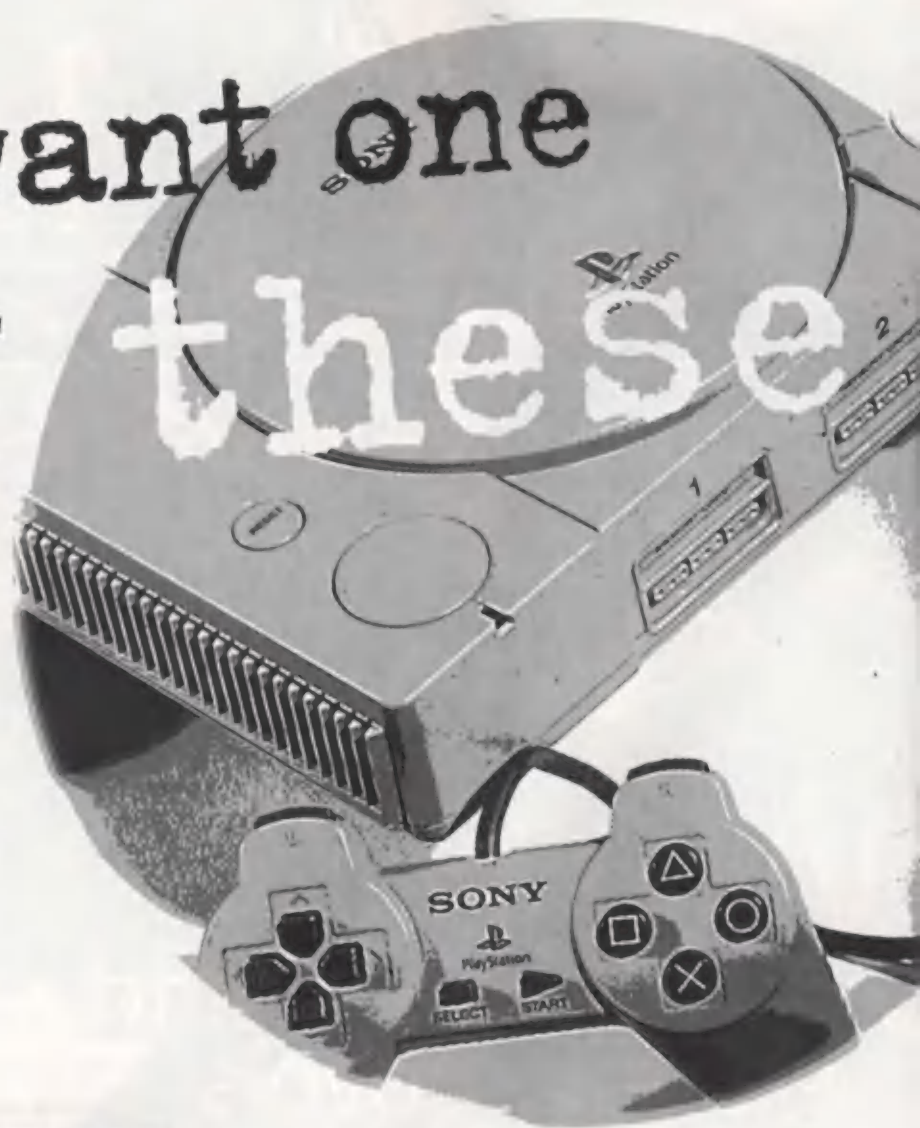
REVIEWS

VIDEO

Win!
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graphic novels

you don't want
one

you want one
of these



of them



For those unfortunates who don't yet have a PlayStation, here's an enthusiastic account from an anonymous Internet user who just had to share his experience with us. For the wise, read on and remember that beautiful moment when you got home and opened your PlayStation for the first time

CONTRIBUTORS Alex Lee, Darren @ Dragon Video, Anon

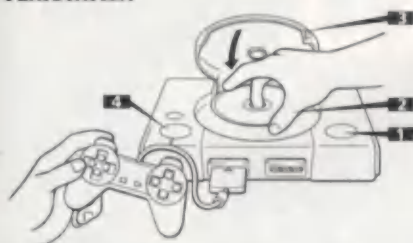


Head-to-Head The Sony PlayStation vs The Sega Saturn

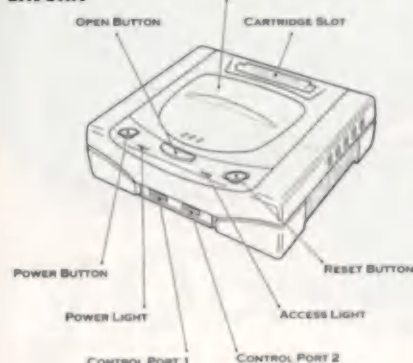
AESTHETICS

The Sony PlayStation wins hands down. It's smaller than the Saturn, pleasingly thin, it just feels higher quality. The Saturn box is better, coloured a nice gold, but boxes get thrown away, so that's a win for the PlayStation. I also got a three-year guarantee with it for \$10, so more points to the PlayStation. I noticed there is no S-video socket on the Saturn, but there is on the PlayStation. It also has three ports: A larger bus-type one behind a panel and two smaller ones. The Saturn has just one, marked 'communication'.

PLAYSTATION



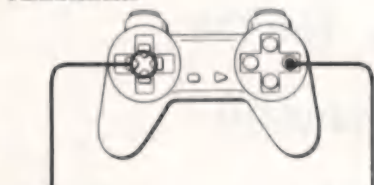
SATURN



JOYPADS

The Saturn joystick is basically a slightly enhanced Genesis controller, otherwise unremarkable. Of course, both machines invent new standards for joystick ports, so no using old ones. The Sony joystick, while looking a little awkward, feels great - the extrusions fit into the palms of both hands.

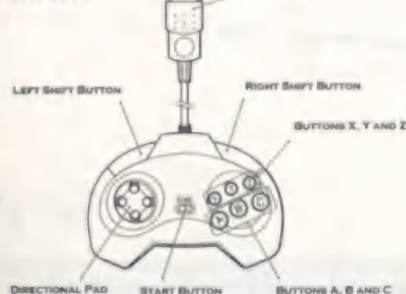
PLAYSTATION



Directional buttons
Boutons de direction
Botones direccionales

Button
Bouton
Boton

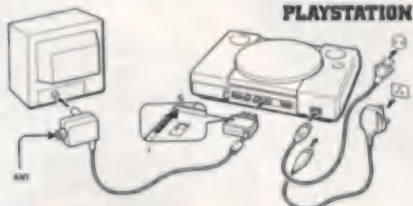
SATURN



DIRECTIONAL PAD START BUTTON BUTTONS A, B AND C

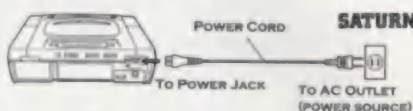
FIRST TURN ON

Turned on the Saturn, (both the units plug directly into the mains thank God, no power packs). The Saturn start-up screen is nice - a swoopy control panel appears over a star field, with two spinning coloured cubes. Very straightforward to use, first surprise - a language feature. Select English and all the instructions are



PLAYSTATION

in English! Bonus! Tried an audio CD, all the usual CD functions available, plus, the cubes pulsate in time to the music. If you dismiss the control panel, the starfield dominates the screen over a rotating nebula picture, and a space shuttle style plane makes random runs back and forth. Nice, but not as good as the 3DO light-synth.



Over to the PlayStation - turn it on, and a lovely gold logo appears, to a very showy sound effect, all surround and echo. The resolution difference between the two machines is obvious straight away. The PlayStation stomps on the Saturn - delicate copyright-righting at the bottom show the finest of pixel sizes. Trying an audio CD in the PlayStation is a little more disappointing. It also has all the normal CD functions, but absolutely nothing to look at while it plays.

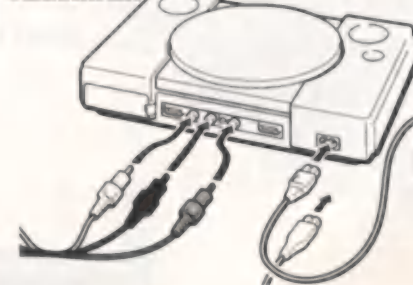
CLOSER ANALYSIS

So, no S-video connection on the Saturn, you have to buy a converter cable. There is one on the PlayStation! Hooray! The Saturn cables are nice and long, but still both controllers sprout from the box in both units. The PlayStation cables are very short, the machine begs to be put on the coffee table, rather than next to the TV. This isn't so stupid actually, as you do tend to do a lot of CD changing and so on with game machines, so it's a pain to install it far away from the settee.

The Saturn manual shows off some available peripherals - a multi-way controller box, mouse, joystick multi-button console and a ram pack. The PlayStation shows off a mouse, cute little memory cards and an RGB cable - try it on the NEC multisync. Opening the covers of both units with a CD inside slows the CD to a halt almost straight away.

The access light on the Saturn is almost invisible, certainly from a distance, and non-existent on the PlayStation. This is a good idea,

PLAYSTATION

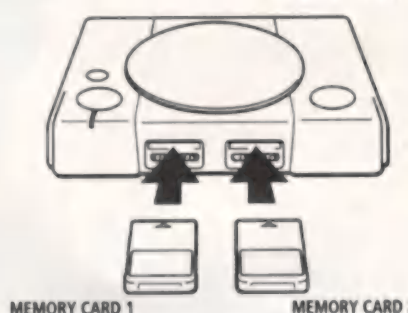


as it doesn't get you fixated on the CD loading delay. Both units have a 'reset' button. Strange! The PlayStation game CDs are black on the non-label side! Actually, they're not black - if you hold them to the light you can just see through them. The laser must be able to scan through them. They work fine in stereos, so they must be standard.

MEMORY MANAGER

Both units have a memory manager built into the start-up consoles, while the PlayStation also offers card-to-card data transfer, which might become interesting in the future. The PlayStation has no internal S-RAM for save-games, you have to buy at least one memory card. The Saturn used '17' of '500' I think, for storing VF high scores and play-results matrix, whatever that means!

PLAYSTATION



MEMORY CARD 1

MEMORY CARD 2



SATURN

Summary

The Saturn console is slightly disappointing, but these things almost never live up to the hype, so all in all, it's still pretty cool. There is definite power lurking there, as twin Risc 30mip CPUs can do a lot. But it's not earned its stripes yet - even accounting for the likes of Rally and Virtua Fighter Remix. For us, the low resolution is annoying. On a 32-inch Sony widescreen

Playing the main title - Saturn

Virtua Fighter was first. 'Identical to the arcade' is the phrase that immediately springs to mind. A few times, body polygons flicker out or disappear completely, but nothing too bad. The speed is certainly identical to the arcade, and all the characters and moves are there.

While impressive, and certainly fun, it's not texture mapped, and does not prove the Saturn can hold it against the PlayStation. It does prove however, that it's got it all over the 3DO, at least for plain polygon rates.



Playing the main title - PlayStation



Try Ridge Racer. Awesome. While it's loading, you get to play Galaxian. Now this is creative use of dead time. First surprise to me was, having loaded Ridge Racer, you can open the PlayStation, take out the CD, and put it away. Ahh, what a joy after those 3DO CD access blues!

Of course, the Ridge Racer techno soundtracks are on the CD (five tracks), but, guess what? You can put in your own favourite CD! I just replaced the game CD with the best audio CD I could think of to match the racing, and listened to that instead of the Rotterdam hard-core which was getting a little annoying after the 20th repetition.

I don't think they 'designed this in', because the tracks are limited to tracks numbered 2-6 from your CD, but

it's a pretty cool feature/bug.

Back to the game - it's Ridge Racer, almost a carbon copy. The differences I could tell are - the textures are not quite as perfect as the arcade, the polygons are obviously a little larger (ie, there aren't as many). One other point of difference is that the distant skyline usually 'pops up' when on the horizon, rather than always being visible, and the glass building over the tunnel doesn't reflect the scene in realtime, otherwise it's all there - smooth rounded car bodies with decals, the aeroplane taking off, night falling, the helicopter, the earth moving machinery.

Plus the announcer sound-bites, sound effects and so on all in RAM, all read off the CD during an initial sub-10 second load! And, of course, you can drive backwards.

And last but not least, the frame rate is there! It's liquid smooth, it must be 24fps or more. From across the room, it looks like a movie! Actually, smoother than a movie. When a movie pans, you notice the frames, well, with Playstation Ridge Racer there is no perception of frame-by-frame scene generation at all, it is just totally smooth.

There also seems to be a few extras. At dusk, the buildings get yellow from the sunset, you can drive a mirror image of the course by driving at speed through a certain barrier, you can get a chase-car view while driving and you don't get whacked from behind as often as the original.

It's so amazing to sit in your lounge playing Ridge Racer on your own TV, learning the tricks that the arcade was too expensive to allow, all from a cream box one third the size of the 3DO.

Based on the evidence of Ridge Racer, the PlayStation can handle perfectly all the arcade titles currently out there, except maybe Virtua Fighter II.

TV, the Saturn's games look a little pixellated. The Playstation, on the other hand, actually exceeds the hype. It's one awesome machine, and watching Ridge Racer spool away in the background, the 500 mips listed for the graphics accelerator at the end of the manual don't look nearly so crazy. A R3000 CPU at 33MHz does the housekeeping, and this mysterious, fat LSI is

obviously doing an amazing amount of work... And the best thing of all? It's the smallest, the cheapest and most beautiful of the 'next generation' consoles. Playstation Pro, on the other hand, is the biggest and most in-depth 'next generation' games magazine and is thus ideally suited to your purposes. You've chosen the right machine, now continue to choose the right magazine.

1) Is there going to be a Sony Playstation II and III?

Yes. The Playstation II is scheduled for release in 1996, the Playstation III in 2003. In the video game industry, that is a very long time from now!

2) Should I hang on for the 'next next' generation?

No. Get the current Playstation now, if you haven't done so already, and rack up your software library. Your software will still work on the new systems, years from now! By then, the likes of Tekken will be (classic moments in) Playstation history...

Sony is working on faster hardware. Who isn't? No specifications of the new systems have as yet been released - it will probably be some time before they do. But developers have been briefed on what is happening. Don't you worry, Sony is 100% committed to the Playstation, and will not leave you out in the cold in six months.

3) Is it possible to copy PlayStation CDs?

The blackness is to keep counterfeiting from happening at all. You see, Sony writes unformatted tracks to the disk that the O/S checks for.

You have to be able to write bad tracks to copy the disc but if you don't know where the bad tracks are, then you can't copy it.

You can't physically see where the bad tracks are to start looking to where to create your own on the bootlegs. They can be all over the CD. Try and read a Sony disk with Norton Disk Edit and see the results for yourself. Be warned, your computer will lock up solid so you will have to cold boot.

Contrary to what has been said (about Ocean Software in Manchester for example), there aren't any bootlegs going around of Playstation games. Sony wrote the book on CD technology so the company knows what it is doing to prevent disc duplication.

Each disc is actually different. When Sony cuts the CDs it uses a code that is unique to the machine that cuts the CDs. No human knows this code and it is random. Not even the operator of the machine knows the code and where the bad tracks/sectors are being written. When the CDs are read into the Playstation the decryption code on the header is then checked to see where the tracks/sectors are. If they are not exactly where they are supposed to be, lock-up occurs.

To copy the discs, you would have to dump and decode the encryption scheme in the Playstation, figure out where all the bad tracks are on the CD, then calculate what algebra was used on that specific disc - all of which takes minimal amount of time during playback on the Playstation. Very clever indeed.

Darren @ Dragon Video

Recent concerns - your questions answered

Recent concerns - your questions answered

Playstation

marvellous magnificent manga

Welcome to the PlayStation Pro Manga pages. Look no further than here for the most informed look at the latest in anime – it's the only regular monthly Manga area in any games mag

NEW RELEASES FROM MANGA VIDEO

Bubblegum Crash Part 3 – Melt Down Certificate 12



On the streets of Mega Tokyo it takes a special kind of heroine to fight the hardwired forces of chaos.

Dedicated to justice, the vigilante Knight Sabres – Sylia, Priss, Nene and Linna, defend the city against the cyber-conspiracy that threatens to engulf it.

The Knight Sabers come face-to-face with an indestructible enemy as they finally unmask the mastermind behind their recent adversaries. The final plan, however, for the annihilation of the city of Mega Tokyo, has begun, with an out-

of-control drilling machine on a collision course with Japan's biggest nuclear reactor.

Sylia and her gang are about to meet their match in their most dangerous ever foe. If they lose, the meltdown begins! Melt Down is the final chapter of the three-part cyberpunk adventure series – the first two parts are also available on Manga video.

3x3 Eyes Part 5 Certificate 15



The time for the resurrection of the dark lord Kuei-Yan-Wang draws near, and the destruction of the world is at

hand. Only two people can stop him – the last of a mystical and immortal race, Pai of the Sanjiyan Unkara and her champion, Yakumo Fuji, the boy

marked with the sign of the void

Yakumo and Pai's travels finally bring them to the Sacred Gate of Lost Time which leads to the City of the Sanjiyan. It is here where they must begin the most dangerous journey of all. A journey into the dark past of the Sanjiyan folk and their malevolent lord Kaiyanwan. It is here that Pai can unlock the secrets of her past and the truth behind her identity. But some secrets are best left well alone, as the truth may destroy them all.

As the ultimate battle dawns, the forces of Darkness gather their strength, preparing finally to destroy all who stand in their way. Are Pai's mystical powers up to thwarting the ancient evil that has once again reared its hideous head? In this action-packed finale, the fate of the world will be decided – once

and for all. The first four parts of 3x3 Eyes are also available on Manga video.

Junk Boy Certificate 18



Ryohei Yamazaki is a cool 23-year-old, with an extremely high sex drive – a smooth talker with lady-killing

eyes and a winning smile. The video sees him in relentless pursuit of the perfect woman. When he catches the eye of the beautiful senior Editor Yuki, you know he's not just going far, he's going all the way.

He falls into a job at Potato Boy magazine that seems tailor-made for him – but how far can you get if your sole pastime is checking out naked birds? Now he's aiming for the top, turning Potato Boy into a best-selling mag. No-one expected things to get so hot so fast, but Yamazaki knows what he wants and how to get it. And he won't take no for an answer.

CLASSIC MOMENTS IN MANGA VIDEO

Akira Certificate 15

Neo Tokyo, 30 years from now. The third world war is just a vague memory for a new generation of teenagers. Riots have reduced the city to a festering sewer of human misery and unrest. Neo Tokyo is about to explode.

Enter Tetsuo and Kaneda – two gang members and close friends from their school days. When Tetsuo is kidnapped by the military, Kaneda begins to uncover a secret so incredible that it threatens the very balance of nature. Tetsuo might just be a god.

So begins a race against time for Kaneda as he fights the military, battles his old friend and discovers the awesome secret

ent' manic...

of Akira. It's at this point that things get complicated. This is no cartoon - it's a work of art.

Akira is packed with jaw-dropping animation and special effects. Computer assisted animation makes it look more realistic than any other movie of its type. Brilliant characterisation, an incredible script and a superb soundtrack, Akira approaches perfection in animated moviedom. And that's why it's the biggest selling Manga video of all time.

The Fist Of The North Star Certificate 18

The strongest man in the universe. The world's number one hard bloke. The most unbelievably tough geezer since the dawn of man. Introducing Ken - The Fist Of The North Star. Mind you, in the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust you need to be a bit handy with your fists. Our hero, however, may have taken things a bit too far.

Hokuto No Ken, he of the clenched hand/nordic stellar nickname, is unstoppable. Example - in one scene, a group of punks is about to set upon a small child.

Ken, hearing her screams, emerges from a deep sleep and heads off downtown to rescue her. As he marches forward, he destroys entire skyscrapers with single blows and wades through collapsing buildings like a labrador puppy through Andrex. When he finally reaches the punks, he leathers all of them - without breaking sweat.

The plot does get a touch confusing at times - it wouldn't be Manga if it didn't - as you try to ascertain who is Ken's brother by bloodline and who is his spiritual one.

Once you've got this sussed, however, you're soon left with a spectacularly violent spectacle, hence the 18 certificate. An epic assault on the senses.

Tetsuo - The Iron Man Certificate 18

Dark, moody and ultimately incredibly confusing, Tetsuo is a nightmarish flick that centres around a commuter who knocks down a nutter in a hit and run incident that he lives to regret.

The aforementioned nutter is a self-made cyberman - a low-budget Terminator whose first appearance sees him insert a length of steel into his thigh, then run off in agony.

The perpetrator of the hit and run soon turns into the victim, however, first through guilt, then by an altogether weird transformation.

Some bizarre trigger has been set off and his body begins to inexorably mutate into a mechanoid.

Getting to grips with the plot, as ever, is as nightmarish as the movie.

Shot entirely in melodramatic monochrome and edited with a faulty chainsaw, it flickers and jumps all over the place. If you struggled with Twin Peaks, then leave Tetsuo well alone. The shock factor is a major player in Tetsuo, with some scenes shockingly funny, others shockingly violent.

If you fancy something so far off the rails that it's in the ticket office then this is an ideal choice.

Be warned - don't watch it on a full stomach and don't give it to your old dear for Mother's Day.

Also recommended:

The Guyver series
Monster City
Tetsuo 2 - Body Hammer
Urotsukidoji - Legend Of The Demon Womb
Ghost In The Shell
Roujin-Z
Wicked City
Ultimate Teacher
Go! Go! 13
Crying Freeman series

Win one of 15 new Gall Force 1 videos Certificate PG

By 2085, mankind's battle against the robotic NMEs was nearly over. With most of Earth's survivors evacuated to Mars, only the hardest and most resourceful fighters remain to fight a futile guerrilla war.

In the bombed-out wastelands of Australia, Sandy Newman and her crew are the last hope to defeat the mechanoid menace. Hidden in the desert lies an intact nuclear missile silo, with a warhead capable of destroying the stronghold of the NMEs and their command computer GORN.

During the search for the secret base, however, Sandy and co discover there's another group of survivors. These are followers of the Geo Chris religion, and deep inside their hide-away stands the mystical Tree of Revival, poised to grow again and rejuvenate the burnt Earth. But will the power of faith be enough to stop the destruction of the human race?

Competition

Total value over £150



To be in with a chance of winning your own copy of this fantastic video, just answer the following question. Return the form to Manga Compo, FREEPOST, IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4YB to arrive no later than Dec 31.

What is the biggest-selling Manga video in history?

- a) Akira
- b) Fist Of The North Star
- c) Tetsuo

Answer

Name

Address

Tel

☐ Tick if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies

WANT TO GET KITTED OUT IN MANGA STYLE, BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO? THE FOLLOWING DESIGNS ARE ALL AVAILABLE ON T-SHIRTS, MAIL ORDER FROM PROTOTYPE 21 ON 0171 372 6841



centralstation

I'm the trouble starter,
punkin' instigator
I'm the fear addicted,
danger illustrated
I'm a firestarter,
twisted firestarter
you're the firestarter,
twisted firestarter
I'm the bitch you hated,
filth infatuated
Yeah, I'm the pain you tasted,
well intoxicated

I'm a firestarter,
twisted firestarter
you're the firestarter,
twisted firestarter

I'm the self-inflicted,
live detonator

Yeah, I'm the one infected,
twisted detonator

Firestarter lyrics:

© Liam Howlett

THE
prodigy
EXPERIENCE

THE PRODIGY

LIVE AT MANCHESTER

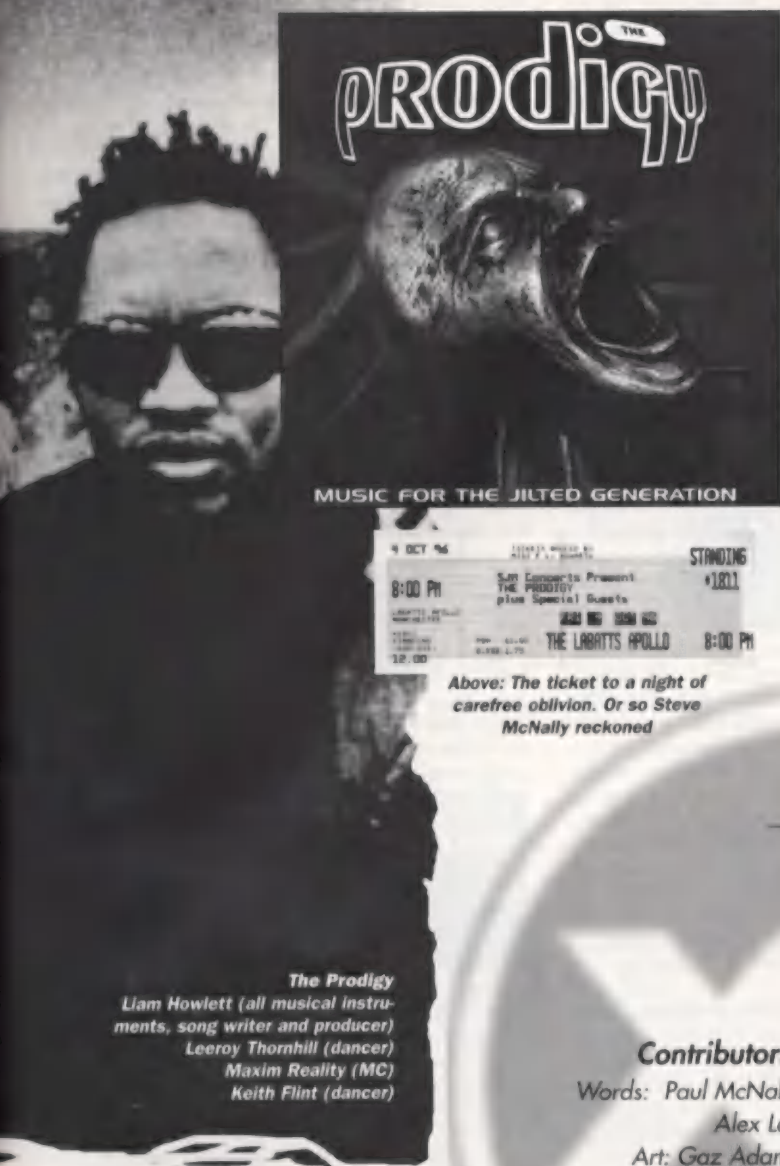
A part from playing PlayStation games to the death, the PSPros get out of the house/their heads now and then. Here's what happened the other week at the Apollo when they joined the throng who'd massed to worship The Prodigy...

It was almost as if the local juvenile delinquents had taken the Prodigy's recent Number One hit, Firestarter too literally. They launched a barrage of rockets and assorted fireworks into the queuing masses outside Manchester's Apollo.

At seven o'clock the queue was already snaking around the building and by the time the doors had opened half an hour later, the air was filled with the shrill of 'only a pound' whistles. The pop kids were getting over-excited, the PlayStation Pros were pushing in pissed.

The supporting DJs tried to get the masses going early, but most people were content to stand in the bar staring at the schoolgirls (or was that just us?) almost wearing their best ravey club gear. But by the time the first act - techno new boys Barcode - arrived everybody piled through into the main hall for the start of the event.

Accompanied by a bad video relayed on a giant overhead



The Prodigy

Liam Howlett (all musical instruments, song writer and producer)
 Leeroy Thornhill (dancer)
 Maxim Reality (MC)
 Keith Flint (dancer)

Above: The ticket to a night of carefree oblivion. Or so Steve McNally reckoned

Contributors:

Words: Paul McNally
 Alex Lee
 Art: Gaz Adams

:Discography

Numbers after the months indicate dance chart and national chart positions respectively

:Singles

1991

What evil lurks (February) 31
 Charly (August) 1, 3
 Everybody in the place (December) 1, 2

1992

Fire (September, deleted after a week) 1, 11
 Out of space (November) 6, 3

1993

Wind it up (March) 11, 3
 One love (July) 5, 8

1994

No good (Start the dance) (May) 4, 4
 Voodoo people (August) 6, 13

1995

Poison (March) 5, 13

1996

Firestarter (March) 2, 1

:Albums

1992

Experience (November) 1, 12

1994

Music for the jilted generation (July) 1, 1

STEER APOLLO 4.10.96

screen, quality techno was hammered out to an audience gagging for it. By the time they left there were a few pale faces gasping for the most fundamental elements for survival – air and water.

Back came the DJs and expectation began to rise. At 10.30pm in a blaze of strobes and mass of noise, lead-man and basically the do-everything-technical Liam Howlett arrived followed closely by menacing sidekick Maxim – he of the feline contact lenses – who immediately started to look malevolent.

The Prodigy had promised new material and deliver it they did. Starting off with a new track the 2,000+ inside lapped it up. When the first bars of Voodoo People blasted from the speakers and Keith arrived – he of the green hair that old people complained about after Top Of The Pops – everybody in the place went off their heads.

The hits from the Jilted Generation album were seamlessly mixed with new tunes from the forthcoming LP. The new single Breathe was delivered in time to get everybody to rush out and buy it and make it another inevitable Number One. Poison went on for ten minutes with the crowd bouncing about and it wouldn't have been a Prodigy gig without a full rendition of the anti-government anthem Their Law, grunge guitars and all.

It was Firestarter however, that sent the Apollo mental. This was possibly the highlight of the night due to the sheer energy put in by the band – its number swelled to five by the spiky-haired perpetrator of aforementioned grunge guitar.

Before we knew it, the hour and a quarter set was complete. It was encore time and The Prodigy invited the crowd onto the stage. No Good (Start the Dance) pumped out followed by a new jungle tune and next minute they had gone, leaving the incongruous living room-style set behind. By this time, PSPro's Steve was legless and Alex was shirtless.

Creator Liam Howlett always said he didn't want The Prodigy to be just a techno band. Their use of guitars and other 'real' instruments destroyed unjustified media jibes of being 'just another dance act'. Their massed following is testament to the band's appeal as an accomplished live act – as two sell-out nights at the Apollo proved. Europe's best underground dance act continues to go from strength to strength.



book reviews

SIMPS-O-RAMA

Although they're all poised to pounce onto BBC any day, Matt Groening's dysfunctional family are currently storming your bookshop with this monster collection



of The Simpsons Comics. For just £6.99 you can get hold of four extended comic strip stories from the immensely popular series. Fallen Flanders, Survival Of The Fattest, Give Me Merchandising Or Give Me Death! and To Hell Is Homer are the four episodes in question, and each one is a top laugh riot - in certain places these comics can be even funnier than the cartoon show! - especially when beer-loving Homer mysteriously inherits a brewery. An excellent collection of the most amusing cartoon characters ever. Top stuff.

Titan Books

OUT: Now

PRICE: £6.99

SCORE: ★★★★★

SIN CITY: THE BIG FAT KILL

The original hardback edition was an instant sellout. It's just scooped the 1996 Eisner Award for the Best Limited Series at the San Diego comics convention. Now, Frank Miller's third instalment of the awesome Sin City series is back - on paperback! £11.99 will see you right for an enthralling action adventure starring the hero of Sin City: A Dame To Kill For, Dwight, battling to save Old Town being overrun by the

mob. He's desperately trying to keep the police and the pimps out of there too, which results in some serious blood-shedding in Miller's own visually amazing black and white artwork. It's a beauty, whatever way you look at it, so go get yourself a copy and indulge.

Titan Books

OUT: Now

PRICE: £16.99

SCORE: ★★★★★

BATMAN: DARK LEGENDS

Another collection of thrilling Batman tales awaits you if you get hold of Dark Legends this summer. Four short stories from the Legends Of The Dark Knight series



have been rammed into one paperback wad of pure graphic novel glory, each one showing a different side of

the Batman not often seen. Again, Dennis O'Neil and Alan Grant share some of the writing credits, as do Bryan Talbot, Dan Raspler and Mike Mignola, resulting in some of the exciting and thought provoking stories of the Dark Knight you're ever likely to read. Dark Legends would be a wise and most excellent purchase.

Titan Books

OUT: Now

PRICE: £8.99

SCORE: ★★★★★

BATMAN: CONTAGION

An evil and deadly plague is sweeping Gotham, and as usual, Bruce Wayne and his band of merry crimefighters must save the city from certain extinction! Allegedly the most important

Batman storyline since the Knightfall trilogy, Contagion features the artistic talents and hard hitting scripts of Doug Moench, Dennis O'Neil, Kelley Jones, Garth



Ennis and Alan Grant - so you know from that line up, Contagion is the business! DC characters Robin,

Nightwing, Azrael, Huntress, Poison Ivy and Catwoman all make appearances in the plot as Gotham slowly starts to die and even the boy wonder finds himself in the sick bed. Will Batman save the day? Is there a cure? Or is Gotham heading for an early grave? All will be revealed at a bookstore near you - now!

Titan Books

OUT: Now

PRICE: £8.99

SCORE: ★★★★★

ALIENS VS PREDATOR: WAR

To celebrate the fact that good old Sigourney Weaver is strapping on her dirty vest once more and romping around the galaxy popping



alien pods left, right and centre with the new Aliens IV movie - yes, it's really happening! - Titan Books are

releasing numerous Alien related graphic novels into your bookshop over the next few months. First to be released is AVP: War, which pits the two Hollywood extra-terrestrials head-to-head in one chunky lump of pure pulp goodness. A distress beacon is sighted coming

from a supposedly abandoned world and as usual, the marines are sent in to check it out. Meanwhile, the Predator space craft is on a hunting mission nearby and is not only captive to a hostile alien queen, but the ship's other special passenger is their latest hunting companion - a human. Needless to say things start to go pear-shaped for everyone involved and the human Predator is forced to choose between the different ways of life as well as trying to save her own butt in the process! This classic tale from Robert Sheckley comes complete with a bonus AVP mini series, Duel plus a selection of cover art supplied by Richard Corben and Chris Warner and the whole bundle will set you back a mere £12.95. Which ain't bad when you think about it.

Titan Books

OUT: Now

PRICE: £12.99

SCORE: ★★★★★

ALIENS VS SUPERMAN

DC Comics' favourite caped crime-fighter, Superman is yet another of these strange Aliens Versus... tie-ins, and this time it's the entire planet that's under threat from the xenomorph beasts. An alien probe has crash landed and is attempting communication by



using superman's other tongue, Krypton. As Superman starts getting all misty-eyed about the life

he never lived back on Krypton, the alien visitors are hatching a more devious plan inside the

video reviews

BLADE RUNNER

see competition strip

You can now experience Ridley Scott's \$30 million cult classic once again, as it's now out on re-release for you to buy at a vastly reduced price. Harrison Ford stars as the futuristic copper who takes on psycho-replicant Rutger Hauer in a twisted future reality, ends up killing Darryl Hannah and falls in love with robotic babe Sean Young. A must for sci-fi buffs and special effects lovers worldwide.

Warner Home Video

OUT: 28th Oct

PRICE: £6.99

ACTION TRIPLE FEATURE

Those of you hungry for a collection of high-powered action movies

are in for a treat this month because Warner Home Video have gangster flick New Jack City, Die Hard rip-off, Passenger 57, and the bullet bonanza, The Last Boyscout, all on one bulging video for you to take home. And for fifteen quid, you ain't gonna find a bigger slice of testosterone-packed movie fun anywhere else.

Warner Home Video

OUT: Now

PRICE: £14.99

SUDDEN DEATH

Big Jean Claude Van Damme takes the action into overtime as he attempts to stop hordes of gun-toting terrorists blowing up the Vice President, an entire 17,000 seater hockey stadium complete with fans and several Pittsburgh



Penguins and a couple of Chicago Blackhawks. Rest assured he pulls it off via loads of pant-splitting kicks, neat punches and snappy

one liners, just in time for the final buzzer.

CIC Video

OUT: Now

RENTAL

BROKEN ARROW

John Travolta stars as double-crossing Air Force pilot who nicks a load of nukes, leaving co-pilot Christian Slater running around with park ranger Samantha Mathis, trying to get them back before big John blows up the world. There's



loads of bullets and explosions and stupid stunts throughout, but if you fancy something that won't strain your brain too much, then this is an ideal after pub, fight and kebab watch.

Fox Guild Video

OUT: 28th Oct

RENTAL

CALENDAR GIRL

The Page 3 'glamour' model of the 80s is back from the dead with not only a pert new look but also an abundance of dubious photo shoots. Now Sam's got her



very own video coming out. Shot in sunny Marbella, the film 'reveals Sam's true beauty and sex appeal with some of the most stunning lingerie and swimwear shots ever seen'. Not an ideal pressie for

your mum, but it's a fair bet your Dad or brother will give it a ' cursory glance'.

Telstar Video

OUT: Now

PRICE: £10.99

R.E.M. ROAD MOVIE

Now they've got their latest long player, New Adventures in Hi-Fi out in the shops and racing up the charts, the

Georgian global superstars are following it up with a 90 minute film/live video featuring tracks from the new album as well as behind the scenes footage and plenty of other classic tracks. It's also released on Laser Disc. If you're posh enough to have one.

Warner Vision

OUT: Now

PRICE: £12.99

probe. So what happens? Well, you'll have to go out and get yourself a copy if you really want to know, all I can say is that considering the story comes from acclaimed writer Dan Jurgens and regular Aliens artist Kevin Nowlan - who, incidentally, won the 1996 Harvey Award for Best Inker for his contributions to this book - you're gonna have fun flicking through this manic tale pitting the world's ultimate hero against the deadliest species ever. £9.99 is all it'll cost you to find out whether Superman can save the world - again, and it's a tale that's well worth the coin if you ask me.

Titan Books
OUT: Now
PRICE: £8.99
SCORE: ★★★★★

ALIENS: STRONGHOLD
see competition strip

Married work partners, Phil and Joy Strunk, are on a routine supply run to one of many biotechnologists lay around the galaxy when they stop off to deliver a package for Dr Nordling. He's the only human on his space station, with the rest of the crew being made up of various synthetic bodies, most of who are under the masterful spell of Nordling. Joy and Phil sense something not quite right with the station and their suspicions are confirmed when they find Nordling has several sex slaves, numerous gun-toting body guards and - believe it or not - a cigar smoking xenomorph all in his power. Things get strange and even more things



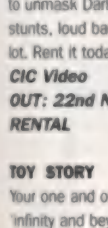
DARKMAN 3

Okay, so the first two movies weren't exactly big hits with film goers, but the Darkman story has many underground fans worldwide, so much so that someone has commissioned this specially made for video movie. Jeff Fahey stars (you know, the nutter out of Lawnmower Man) as a smarmy drug dealer who tries everything to unmask Darkman. Comedy, stunts, loud bangs - it's got the lot. Rent it today!

CIC Video
OUT: 22nd Nov
RENTAL

TOY STORY

Your one and only chance to go to 'infinity and beyond' this year is

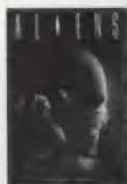


get covered in blood as Joy and Phil find a couple of synthetic allies and begin to kick ass. This is excellent. The whole thing reads like you're watching a movie, with snappy comebacks, witty one-liners and a bizarre and twisted plot buried deep within. You simply must buy this.

Titan Books
OUT: Now
PRICE: £10.99
SCORE: ★★★★★

ALIENS: OUTBREAK

This beauty first appeared way back in 1990, in black and white and managed to shift over 25,000 copies leaving Titan Books all out of stock of this most excellent novel. Now, it's 1996 and a brand new edition of Outbreak is soon to become available. This time



around, the text has been updated to make sure it fits in more accurately with the Aliens movies, plus not only is there a new cover, several new gallery pages, a new foreword and introduction by Mark Verheiden but the whole caboodle has been coloured in! Yes, this new full colour edition is out to buy soon, costs around £11.99 and looks set to sell as many copies as the original - especially when all the Alien IV movie hype kicks later this year. Be wise, buy yours now before they become as collectable as the first edition.

Titan Books
OUT: Now
PRICE: £11.99
SCORE: ★★★★★

to rush out and purchase a copy of Disney's computer generated blockbuster, Toy Story, Oscar winner Tom Hanks and TV's Home Improvement, Tim Allen provide the comical voices of Woody and Buzz Lightyear respectively, as they try to live with each other in a kids' bedroom until they accidentally leave home and wind up in the clutches of the evil kid next door. A first class movie that you simply must own. So buy it.

Disney Video
OUT: now
PRICE: £16.99



THE MASK STRIKES BACK

You've seen the movie by now, hell you might even have read one of the wildly more entertaining graphic novels by now too, so to continue in that trend Titan have released this amazing Mask collection and guess what?



Yep, celebrate - it's totally Jim Carrey free! Since the end of the hilarious preceding novel, The Mask Returns, old Big Hed has been avoiding the police like crazy. Now the Mask has fallen into the hands of four teenagers who know it's powers and all four are anxious to try it on and live out their dreams... and they do. Whilst all that mayhem is going on, there's the small matter of the police getting closer and closer to their big green villain, plus there's the rather large matter of an oversized gangster, Walter, escaping capture and hunting down the Mask for his own personal gain. This book is amazing. Whoever's making the next Mask movie for 1997 should stop what they're doing, scrap it all and convert this side-splitting action adventure to the silver screen instead. Oh, and leave Jim Carrey out of it too. The Mask Strikes Back is in every way excellent, and definitely worth ten quid of anyone's money.

Titan Books
OUT: Now
PRICE: £9.99
SCORE: ★★★★★

competition

Win one of five copies of each of the following by answering one simple question!

Tick which you'd like to go into the draw for

Reading material...
Aliens' Stronghold

And on video...
Dave

Murphy's Law

Telefon

It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World

The New Adventures Of Superman

Being Human

Pinky and The Brain

With Honors

Question:
Name any other movie that With Honors star Joe Pesci has appeared in

Answer
Name
Address
Postcode
Telephone
Age

Send entries to 'Book and Vid Competition' CentralStation, Freepost SK3038, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4YB



Easter Block

Soviet Strike is EA's 'Triple A' product for this winter - in other words, the PlayStation's most prolific third party publisher reckons it's onto a big-time seller here. But what goes into the production of such a massive release? Alex Lee finds out in an interview with the game's producer Michael Kosaka and creative director Michael Becker

1/ What history does the Strike series have?

Strike has appeared on multiple platforms since its introduction in 1992. The Genesis, SNES, Amiga, Mega Drive and IBM have seen versions of some or all the first three Strike games. Desert Strike was released on the Sega Genesis on April 1, 1992. The same year EA released the SNES versions, Jungle Strike was released 18 months later, just on the Genesis this time. Urban Strike came 18 months later, again only on the Genesis. Meanwhile, we had licensed Jungle for the SNES, and saw the Super Nintendo version of Urban Strike in our last fiscal year. In each version of the game new features, vehicles and enemies were included to expand the excitement of the series.

2/ How successful has the Strike series been in terms of units sold?

The Strike series has been very well received, not only in the United States, but worldwide. There is a very strong following throughout Europe, in the armed services and among a wide game playing demographic. Older as well as younger players enjoy Strike's special brand of game play as the 'Thinking Man's Shooter.' We continue to see many requests for a new reincarnation of the product for the 32-bit machines, and have been incorporating everyone's favourite features into the design for the last two years.

3/ What is Soviet Strike's storyline? What will the missions involve? Do they change according to progress or are they set?

In 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the largest military force in history, suddenly and unexpectedly collapsed and died. Since that time the fallen empire has lain lifeless - a rich corpse waiting to be picked clean. Now, a sinister ex-KGB general codenamed Shadowman directs a flock of vultures to swoop in from all parts of Eastern Europe and claim Russia's nuclear warheads and weapons of mass terror. While directing these 'wars of liberation' Shadowman intends to shake democratic Russia to its foundations, bringing about a return to the Cold War... or even worse.

You chopper into Crimea and discover the plot of a Russian madman using thermal spy devices. You must quickly move on to the Black Sea to prevent the hijacking of ICBM ships,

respond to an attack on a chemical weapons plant in the desert passes and then recover a nuclear reactor core in Transylvania.

As you successfully thwart these stages of Operation Vulture, Shadowman is forced to take his coup to the streets of Moscow. Guide your chopper through five unique 3D worlds as you complete 41 deadly missions. Enemy vehicles, tactics and responses change, based upon your activities, making this the first of Strike's new 'Living Battlefields'.

The Strike games are successful because the activity you cause - every building blasted, every vehicle destroyed, every man rescued and every military objective accomplished - links directly to obvious effects. These include clues, fuel drums, ammo crates, the appearance of new objectives and so on which take you deeper into the game.

This complex tapestry of cause and effect is what makes the gameplay so involved and challenging. And since the causes can be activated in a variety of sequences, the effects also unfold differently each time, depending upon player activity.

Since the game is designed for an optimum sequence of cause and effect - which makes it easy or perhaps is the only way to get through a given campaign - there is a great deal of inherent challenge in understanding and mastering this underlying design pattern. All this combines to make for a rich, replayable game.

4/ How many scenarios are featured in Soviet Strike and will players be able to utilise a variety of vehicles in each mission?

As players attempt to conclude each of the over 40 different missions, they will encounter hundreds of different scenarios involving villages, enemy camps and troop concentrations, and even large parts of Moscow itself! Each situation will test both reflexes and thinking to discover the intelligent way of dealing with the problem at hand. Sometimes it's best to shoot everything in sight; other times to rescue everyone without doing any damage. Only by reviewing briefings and on-line intelligence transmissions will players be able to understand the best tactic for each situation.

5/ This is the fourth game in the series - have you included any new features for pla-

modes we haven't seen in the first three?

Many new features have been designed into Soviet Strike, both to tap the power of the new machines and to grow the Strike universe further. We've included the classic Strike camera view as well as a new 3D Chase Plane view, allowing players to switch between views at will.

We have included an Online Cluebook with hundreds of window videos, graphics and voice clues. This allows players to think their way out of difficult missions. We have created a Living Battlefield where the enemy forces have their own missions and move about the world, creating destruction and challenging players to understand their patterns and activities.

We have also created new Strike characters and added a whole new covert storyline and compelling video storytelling, so players can better be part of this exciting experience.

6/ What prompted you to develop a 32-bit sequel and why choose the PlayStation to do it on? Is it a difficult console to develop for?

We want to bring exciting games to every machine which has a significant game player following. PlayStation is one such machine. Soviet Strike is also being prepared for the Sega Saturn.

7/ What are the differences and advantages between developing for cartridge and CD?

Simply put, there's a whole lot of data to create for a cartridge! Seriously, now that we have a CD platform for Soviet Strike, we are able to create richer and more complex stories, give greater reality so the campaigns really seem to be 'ripped from the headlines', and have living, breathing characters that live and die, based on what you do. The enhanced power of the new processors also allows for new, exciting visual and video displays.

8/ How have you taken advantage of the PlayStation's sound and hardware features?

We designed a game experience with several thousand video, audio and text elements which interact with the game player continually throughout the various campaigns. We've also aimed for a higher level of visual and audio realism and impact than ever before possible. We hope others will agree that our efforts were a success.

9/ How many people comprise the development team and how is the workload divided?

It's hard to get an accurate count, since so many people contribute in a large game like Strike. We find that we divide the workload according to different sub-teams with special skill sets, such as computer artists, tool engineers and such like.

10/ Was a conscious decision made to retain the isometric angle or were you tempted to develop a completely new game engine?

The game engine is entirely new and 3D based. The screen shots you see are made from only one of the camera views, the classic Strike view. We prefer the out-of-the-chopper view for Soviet Strike. It allows you to see the people and objects you are attempting to winch up as resources or rescue missions. Many of these types of gameplay are impossible in POV cockpit shooters.

11/ What will entice people to buy Soviet Strike? What are the unique selling points over similar games?

They'll have to play the game and like it. If they do, they'll tell their friends. Many of us on the team have been in the game industry for 10 to 15 years, and we've noticed that if a game is good, people will learn about it and it will become a success.

12/ Does Soviet Strike use the PlayStation's multi-player link up or any of its peripherals? No, because they represent such a small subset of the overall game market. Perhaps in the near future.

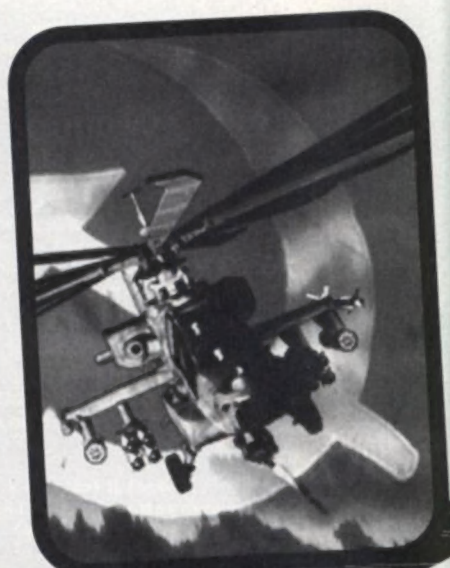
13/ So far we've had Desert, Jungle, Urban and now Soviet Strike. Are there any plans to continue the series?

Yes. Stay tuned. In fact, there are several clues about where Strike might go next, buried in Soviet Strike's video and audio sections.

14/ What projects and games do you have planned for the future?

We can't really comment on our future plans, but here is a summary of the previous games. Keep an eye on us in the future - we promise to do our best to entertain the game playing public.

rn -buster?



DESERT STRIKE

A madman in the Middle East is about to start Armageddon. General Kilbaba, having murdered his way to a huge oil fortune, has amassed an immense military arsenal. Now he is poised for an assault on the West. The President has deployed you, the Air Force's best chopper pilot, to save the world from destruction.

Gameplay

Locate and destroy nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons facilities. Stop calamitous oil spills. Rescue downed fighter pilots and American ground troops from war-torn cities. Break out hostages from POW camps. Then take out the Madman himself in 28 action-filled missions.

JUNGLE STRIKE

Now the storm hits the jungle! The Desert Madman is dead, but now his vicious son plots a nuclear strike against the USA. He's enlisted a powerful ally - the ruthless South American Drug Lord with an army of high-tech mercenaries. It's your mission to take them out. Stalk the terrorists from the streets of Washington DC to the deadly jungles, rivers and snow covered peaks of South America.

Gameplay

Sixteen megs of all new features, including nine action-packed campaigns with 63 different missions. Drive and fly four new combat vehicles, including a Super Comanche attack helicopter, Stealth Fighter, Assault Motorcycle, and MX-9 Attack Hovercraft. You face 26 new enemy weapons systems across a variety of campaign terrains.

URBAN STRIKE

Home field advantage! Now a new evil challenges the Strike organisation, right here in

American Ruthless media mogul and political maverick H.R. Malone secretly plans to de-stabilise the US. government. Crush this rebellion as you defend America's national treasures against vicious enemy assaults in New York, San Francisco, Las Vegas and beyond.

Gameplay

Over 61 different missions in 10 power-packed campaigns across the US. Three new vehicles for your arsenal, with an ability to attack on foot. Massive in-game objects and dense cityscapes, as well as new high-tech enemy weaponry and beefed up AI. New timed levels and interactive panels and special eradication bombs and power-ups.

15) Who makes up the team behind Soviet Strike?

There are so many talented people working on Soviet Strike that it would be unfair to single out individuals for special attention.

16) Tell us about all the weapons available in the game, and what kind of damage they do

Here is a partial listing of the toys you get to play with in Soviet Strike. We aren't including all the damage statistics. Part of the fun of the game experience is discovering these pieces of equipment and learning what they do!

Super Apache
Chaingun
Hydra Rockets
Hellfire Missiles
ECMs
Sidewinders
Wingtip Fuel Pods
Thermal Listening Devices
STRIKE.net
WristComms
AWACS/JSTARS
GBS News Network
Rail Gun

Depth Charges
Freedom Fighters
Backpack Nuke
ICBMs
Burning Oil Wells
Reactive Armour
Onboard Geiger Counter
USN Destroyer
Sikorski air drops
Blackhawk helicopters at LZ
LVTP
LSSC
Attack Speedboats
Abrams Tanks
Recon Sled
Bulldozer
Laser Designator
Tomahawk Strike
Napalm
Quick Ladder
Vampire Wolves
Super Winch
Nuclear Power Plant chain reactions
Ammo Packs
Fuel Packs
Fuel Siphon
Light Tanks
Heavy Tanks
M3 APCs
Flying Stone Obelisks
Landslides
Frozen Lakes
Broken Bridges
Vodka Fuel
Radioactive Sludge
Colour TVs
Russian Bears
A White Ford Bronco
Lenin's Tomb
The President of Russia
The President of the United States
Elvis

17) Which enemies will crop up through the different scenarios?

Each of the five campaigns features a minor villain who directs the local forces. Behind each of these bogus 'Wars of Liberation' is a mysterious ex-KGB leader, codenamed Shadowman, who is orchestrating a major conspiracy which Strike refers to as a 'Worst Case Scenario'. Each minor villain controls a unique

combination of ex-Soviet military hardware, including helicopters, tanks, SAM missiles, ships, landing craft, SCUDs and more exotic (and dangerous!) weapon systems. Here is some of the enemy equipment you'll encounter in Soviet Strike -

AAA Systems
ZSU Mobile AA Systems
BA-20 antique Armoured Cars
Pickup trucks with machine guns
BRDM Scout Cars
BRDM-3 Heavy Scout Cars
BTR-70 Light Personnel Carriers
BMP Medium Personnel Carriers
Snow Sleds
Cargo Trucks of all kinds
Gaskin Light SAM vehicles
Gainful Medium SAM vehicles
Ganf Heavy SAM launchers
Straight Flush Radar Systems
Speedboats of all varieties
PT-76 Light Tanks
T-55 Medium Tanks
T-80 Heavy Tanks
BM-21 Light Rocket Launchers
SCUD Missiles and Launchers
SKAR Multiple Rocket Launchers
Hind Helicopters
Hip Helicopters
Havoc Helicopters
Destroyers
Landing Craft
Missile Cruisers
and an Aircraft Carrier!

18) Tell us about the photo-realistic landscapes and the polygon technology used

The reference material for the landscapes was created by the Strike air force (art team) who flew from Oregon to Texas to Mexico and photographed dozens of Photo CDs of terrain from a private plane. A Strike art director piloted the craft which was forced to bank continually on one side so the photographers could shoot straight down. At times it was apparently a nauseating experience. The polygon technology was the custom creation of our engineering team. They are sworn to secrecy.

interview

centurion 13

The PlayStation Pro software house t-shirt score ratings explained. Individual categories out of five, overall out of 10

SIZE this isn't just the size stated on the label, it's whether that size is accurate and if the dimensions are okay - no-one likes a t-shirt with too-short sleeves and an over-long body

COLOUR black is very common, therefore can be a bit passé, but white stains easily. Is it a primary colour rather than a shade of grey?

TEXTURE does it feel like a smooth cotton dream or like a rough hessian nightmare?

WEIGHT the heavier the better, really - light t-shirts are no good in the cold and tend to lose their shape more

WASHING does the colour run, the design fade and the shape go or does it come out as brilliant as it was when you first pulled it out of the plastic wrapping?

TRENDINESS would you dare wear it out of the house, or is it merely a winter bed wear job?

DESIGN is the logo about as inspiring as a John Major speech or does it beg to be emblazoned across your chest?

OVERALL point score out of 10 and ranking in the

Electronic Arts Team F1

Size - a pretty accurate XL, with everything in the right proportions ★★★★★

Colour - my personal preference is for primaries such as blue and red, but this dark, military green is quite strong ★★★★★

Texture - feels thick and warm ★★★★★

Weight - nice and heavy, gives the impression that it'll wash well ★★★★★

Washing - no sign of any 'mares yet, although the small logo on the right breast looks a bit too delicate for continued survival ★★★★★

Trendiness - typefaces used are pretty fashionable and it's unusual enough to cause the odd double-take ★★★★★

Design - fairly understated - looks like something a roadie would wear ★★★★★

**Overall 7.5/10
Ranking 5th =**



Acclaim Mortal Kombat II

Size - XL, although slightly too short in the body ★★★★★

Colour - black with blue, red and yellow ★★★★★

Texture - pretty smooth ★★★★★

Weight - slightly too light, but good quality fabric ★★★★★

Washing - the black has faded slightly after many washes, but the logo is as strong as ever ★★★★★

Trendiness - like the game, a bit dated ★★★★★

Design - ideal for potential psychopaths everywhere ★★★★★

**Overall 7.5/10
Ranking 5th =**

Wouldn't be S dead

The t-shirt is the ubiquitous promo tool for PlayStation software and hundreds have passed through our office. Some are coveted and worn regularly, some are consigned to the compo pages, whereas others are given away. Alex Lee evaluates a selection, varying wildly in quality, and in a typically tight budget-saving measure, cancelled the booking for Naomi, Cindy and Claudia and modelled them himself

Mindscape Steel Harbinger

Size – A generous L, so much so it could pass for an XL ★★★★★

Colour – very light grey ★★★

Texture – strong-feeling rather than smooth and comfortable ★★★★★

Weight – just about right ★★★★★

Washing – retains shape well, but there are doubts over the survival of the front and back print ★★★

Trendiness – bit of a sci-fi/heavy metal number I'm afraid ★★

Design – the front one's a dodgy combination of silver and green, the backprint's far too over the top ★★

Overall 6/10
Ranking 9th (and last)



Empire Interactive Pro Pinball

Size – Spot-on XL ★★★★★

Colour – dark blue with red and white lettering ★★★★★

Texture – Fred Perry polo shirt style – attracts cat hair s like nobody's business ★★★★★

Weight – just about right ★★★★★

Washing – collar has loosened a little, but that's the only criticism ★★★★★

Trendiness – would probably go down well with a skinhead who couldn't afford a Fred Perry ★★★

Design – classic – or a bit old fashioned, depending on your taste ★★★

Overall 8/10
Ranking 3rd =



Eidos Interactive Eidos Interactive

Size – Spot-on XL ★★★★★

Colour – dark blue with white lettering ★★★★★

Texture – middling – needs a few washes ★★★

Weight – slightly too light, but nothing to worry about ★★★★★

Washing – can't complain, but it's admittedly one of newest ones ★★★★★

Trendiness – minimalist design on the left breast and on the back means it can be dressed up or down (or so a fashion mag might say) ★★★★★

Design – modern and completely inoffensive ★★★★★

Overall 8/10
Ranking 3rd =



US Gold The Incredible Hulk

Size – L, and because of this it's a bit small when you're used to wearing XLs. The sleeves are particularly lilliputian ★★

Colour – black with puke purple, bile green and sickly yellow ★★★★★

Texture – average to not that good – a bit rough ★★

Weight – too light, but that could be down to it being too small ★★★★★

Washing – its major redeeming feature – it just won't go away. As tenacious as the Hulk itself – probably ★★★★★

Trendiness – wildly trendy among Marvel comic fans only ★★★

Design – undeniably very strong, again a bit like the character it portrays ★★★★★

Overall 6.5/10
Ranking 8th



Green in one!

Wouldn't be seen dead in one!

Virgin Interactive Sydney Morning Herald

Size – good fitting XL with disappointingly short sleeves ★★★★★

Colour – white with black lettering and imagery ★★★★★

Texture – pseudo thin, but comfortable enough ★★★★★

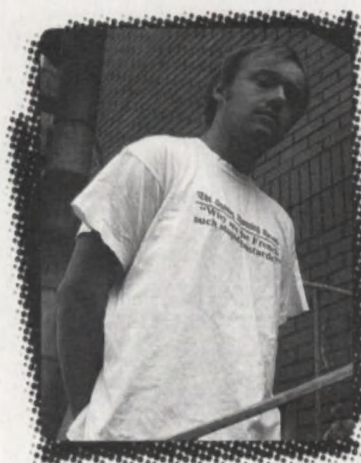
Weight – a little too light ★★★★★

Washing – excellent – the lettering on front and picture on back has survived, as well as the classic t-shirt shape ★★★★★

Trendiness – not trendy, but will remain controversial so long as French people exist ★★★★★

Design – a cheeky pastiche of newspaper headlines and typography ★★★★★

**Overall 8.5/10
Ranking 2nd**



Philips Media Fast and furious

Size – a slightly small XL, with shortish sleeves and body length ★★★★★

Colour – white with black, yellow and red detail ★★★★★

Texture – a little thin, but not transparent ★★★★★

Weight – not heavy enough, but not too flimsy either ★★★★★

Washing – has held its size, shape and colour over several washes ★★★★★

Trendiness – lettering on white has been a successful t-shirt formula for years ★★★★★

Design – a good, text-only montage explaining what it's like to be dedicated to sport ★★★★★

**Overall 7/10
Ranking 7th**



Psychosis wipEout

Size – XL, with everything in proportion. Body perhaps slightly too long ★★★★★

Colour – light grey with iridescent yellow, glowing orange and bright white lettering ★★★★★

Texture – smooth, but slightly too thin to warrant the full five ★★★★★

Weight – marginally too light ★★★★★

Washing – full marks here – both shape and colour showing no sign of depreciation ★★★★★

Trendiness – about as trendy as a software house t-shirt gets ★★★★★

Design – excellent use of Designers' Republic's original typeface on front, back and left sleeve ★★★★★

**Overall 9/10
Ranking 1st**



star prize

Central Station comment

The world of the PlayStation fills us with hope and enthusiasm for the future of gaming, but certain things get our dander up worse than rotten. Take the Aura Interactor for example...

What can 60 dabs buy you these days? Let us give you some suggestions. A single new PlayStation release with a bit of change left over to subscribe to PlayStation Pro. Or two bargain bucket games. Maybe a mouse and a multitap adaptor or a joypad or two. All reasonable additions to a PlayStation owner's collection. Or how about an Aura Interactor Backpack?

A what? Imagine a peripheral which you could wire up to the PlayStation, strap to your back and when, for example, you play a beat'em-up and an opponent strikes, you actually feel the power of the blow, sending you reeling backwards. Well, such a peripheral doesn't exist. Although the Aura Interactor purports to do exactly the above. In reality, all that

happens is that it buzzes annoyingly, rattles a bit and ultimately gives you backache. Apparently the yanks love it.

Oh good. Thanks Aura. I didn't want that 60 quid. No seriously. I didn't. Cheers. In fact, can I have another one? PlayStation Pro seriously recommends you don't buy one of these. There are all sorts of far more useful things you could buy for £60. Wire mesh watering cans, left handed mallets, chocolate fireguards, toffee teapots, Pope's balls...

Which brings us to the end of the first Central Station, the technophanzine that's dedicated to PlayStation culturalists everywhere. It's now time for you to put fingertips to keyboards or pen to paper and write in with any ideas for features you'd like to see within these pages. If we use any of your ideas, not only will you see your name in glorious monochrome, you'll be sent a prize for your troubles. We may even print the odd well-written games review in full. What greater incentive could there be?

Write to –
Central Station, Freepost SK3038,
Media House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4YB